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VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Centennial Issue

Autumn 1975

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Rancho Camarillo
ANNIVERSARY
September 22, 1875

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The *Quarterly* is published from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer Museum. The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. Grant W. Heil is Editor and the Staff includes Mrs. Naydean L. Baker, Duane L. Garber, Charles H. Heil, Ruth L. Heil, David W. Hill, Charles D. MacGregor, Charles P. Outland, Mrs. Johanna D. Overby, Thomas A. Roe and Richard D. Willett.

Fifteen hundred copies printed for the Pleasant Valley Historical Society and the Ventura County Historical Society by Clark's Printing Co., Ventura, California. Additional copies are available at $1.75 each.

The
Ventura County Historical Society
Quarterly

Vol. XXI, No. 1 Autumn 1975

Grant W. Heil, Editor

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CASA CAMARILLO
By Doris Jean Weimer

Notice

One hundred years ago Juan Camarillo purchased Rancho Calleguas. The home that Adolfo Camarillo built on it became one of the subjects in her master's thesis on Victorian mansions in Ventura County by Mrs. Weimer. The cover was drawn by James Fitzgerald, a grandson of Adolfo Camarillo. Carmen Camarillo Jones supplied the rancho pictures; and Thomas Roe was the photographer of the house. The house plans were drawn by Charles D. MacGregor.

This is the fourth special publication of *The Quarterly* for the Pleasant Valley Historical Society, their Third Anniversary Issue.

CASA CAMARILLO

By Doris Jean Weimer

After the 1850's many of the prosperous California ranchers built homes in the ornate, bay-windowed, be-gabled style fancied during the Victorian era. Open-handed hospitality was characteristic of the period, and spacious ranch houses were needed to entertain neighbors and visitors who passed through from one town to the next.

Most of the more pretentious ranch houses of the Days of the Dons had been built around a patio laid out in flower beds, graveled walks, and a central fountain.

> It was there on the veranda facing the central courtyard that the family and their guests gathered on long, mild, summer evenings. There the meals were eaten, there the children played, and the women busied themselves with their embroideries. There on occasion, the guitars were brought forth, and there followed a period of singing or, perhaps an impromptu fandango that lasted far into the night.

The hacienda possessed comforts and even elegancies rarely encountered in the then remote frontier. In the big, high-ceilinged rooms were to be seen not only furniture transported aboard the Boston ships, but antique chests and family heirlooms brought from Spain and the Orient to California.

A gradual change took place in the prevailing style of architecture at Monterey, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and San Diego after 1850. An admixture of many sorts of other structures developed such as austere New England cottages, Pennsylvania farmhouses, southern colonial manors and brick or stone or wooden residences of many sorts and sizes. Settlers often patterned residences after those in their native towns. One method used by the early builders was to hand saw the clapboard sheathing for the outer walls and the interior finish as well as the heavy timbers of the frames. Another method was the mortise-and-tenon method of securing joints with wooden pegs.

What had been a few years earlier a simple frontier economy had become something far more complex. Many changes took place in the economic life of the new state from Gold Rush days to the end of the Great Drought. The Californians prospered as they provided for the needs of the miners who were eager customers. Profits were especially high in the cattle industry. A steer which had once sold for $2.50 in the hide-and-tallow trade brought $75.00 in the early 1850's when beef was at a premium, and never sold under $30.00 per head.

Among the most interesting of the surviving buildings of that period were the farm houses, particularly those built upon the wheat ranches during the 1860's and 1870's. Some of the valley ranch houses during the heyday of the wheat period were truly impressive examples of mid-Victorian opulence. They were sprawling, two-story frame structures containing a score or more of rooms. Spacious downstairs chambers were fitted up with elegance and exteriors had masses of towers, turrets, dormers, gables and spires in the best style of the day. The era of extravagence led later generations to bestow on it the title of the Gilded Age. The designers of the buildings threw all restraint to the winds and produced the extraordinary structures now assigned to the rococo, mid-Victorian or carpenter's Gothic school. Throughout the 1870's there arose on Nob Hill in San Francisco, at Sacramento, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles a group of mansions that for size and complexity surpassed any the state had previously seen.

In most other parts of the country, bricks or stone were used. The California craftsmen applied themselves to their lathes and jigsaws, turning out quantities of millwork that embellished the facades of elegant homes. Their baroque exteriors as well as the interiors were similar in floor plan design. The homes contained from eight to ten rooms with high fireplaces and were surrounded by iron fences. Walls

and ceilings were covered with frescoes or with beautiful designs.

Nineteenth century America was a country with abundant raw materials and a shortage of skilled workers. This meant a high cost for labor. Such a state of affairs led to the development of labor-saving devices. American inventors revolutionized the preparation of the three traditional building materials (stone, brick, and wood) before they were brought to the building site.

The greatest contribution of the Victorian age to domestic architecture was the provision of ample light, heat, and water to the home. As late as 1845 candles were still considered convenient for use as domestic light. Lamps which burned whale oil were used widely After the discovery of petroleum in 1859 coal oil or kerosene fueled the lamps. The next stage of development was the lighting of city houses by illuminating gas, piped from the factory. In the 1880's the Welsbach light replaced the open gas flame with a glowing gas mantle.

Early in the nineteenth century cooking was done by an open fire. Gas was used for cooking in the 1880's and by the time of the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, electric ranges were demonstrated. At the beginning of the Victorian age householders had to carry or pump water from a well or cistern. It took the better part of the century to bring the benefits of piped water, plumbing and drainage to the average American home.

Throughout the world more houses were built during the nineteenth century than in all previous ages combined. The history of the architecture of this period has been described as a battle of styles, but this should not be taken literally. Throughout Victorian America the various architectural styles flourished in peaceful coexistence. Most of the design influence flowed from the Old World to the New, but the last quarter saw the beginnings of a two-way traffic

etween Europe and America. The great Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia and the Columbian Exposition ere huge successes. Both made many people desire things ey had never seen before and showed manufacturers how supply them cheaply.

The mansions being built by rich Early Victorians were othic in the forms of their details, but the adaptation of ese details to modern shapes and masses was guided sole- by the architect's preconception of the picturesque. Architecture possessed flair, vigour, and originality. The use f mosaic marble, pink granite, gilded bronze as well as a idden iron frame was typical of High Victorian style. Architecture was not the same after the discovery that iron nd architecture were compatible.

The houses were built high with high porches, high indows and high towers and turrets on the outside. On the side were high ceilings, narrow stairways and long halls. omes had high, narrow, pointed windows, sections of sides tting out in a three or six-sided form to accommodate rooms f a wide variety of sizes and shapes: square, round and octgonal. Turrets, towers and pinnacles appeared and lookut platforms loomed on rooftops. To this were added orches, piazzas, balconies, stained-glass windows and trimming. Houses with steep gables were reminiscent of buildgs erected in medieval England. The exaggerated conical oofs, sometimes called candle-snuffers, and rough, stone owers were meant to recall those of Normandy. The high owered roof was covered with rough shingles and sprinkled ith dormers or projections out of the roof. Other houses ere built along the lines of an Italian roof, with four very teep sides. The movement was toward geometric and spaial discipline in design.

The newly rich were anxious to show off their wealth in heir homes. Richly carved posts and decorative designs uch as scroll motifs appeared under eaves of roofs and

around windows and doors. The turning lathe came in use, and wood posts were produced in a variety of curv and rounded designs for the porches. Piazzas were handl lightly with turned posts and spindle work screens whi created an open, airy feeling. Cast iron was used for fenc balconies and for animals on the front lawn.

The rooflike extension jutting out from the side of t house and over a driveway was the ancestor of today's c port. Flights of steps led up to the front and side porch and to doors with leaded, stained glass or cut glass panels a transoms above for ventilation. Inside the front door wa long, high hall with a flight of steep stairs to the second flo Sometimes a monumental fireplace in the huge hall w built which was similar in character to a Gothic hall. T patterned wallpaper covering was bold and the wood tr was dark. Although the house contained plenty of wi dows, they were covered by lace curtains and heavy dra eries.

During the High Victorian Period from 1855 to 18 many **S**-curves, concave and convex bulges occurred on t exterior cornices, brackets and crestings. The interiors h strong moldings, arches, mantle-pieces of marble, Greek go desses etched on glass and the plaster medallions on the ce ing. Henry Hobson Richardson experimented with a ne kind of open interior space characteristic of the open sta case of the Queen Anne design. He was one of the fi truly modern architects who looked to the past for a sour of inspiration but not of imitation.

Victorian Queen Anne houses bore almost no rese blance to the architecture of that English Queen's short reig The style was an English revival of even earlier picturesq houses of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. It beg in the late 1860's and was soon taken over by American buil ers who studied English architecture.

The Queen Anne house was one of the most complex habitations ever devised. The house rejected the traditional concepts of unity in design, deliberately contrasting shapes, textures and colors: solid and void, in and out, square and round, light and dark, rough and smooth. The ground plan was irregular and each facade had a different elevation. The roof with its intersecting ridges and turrets was a problem in solid geometry. Windows, dormers and gables were finished with the Tudor or Jacobean arch which is a four-centered, flat-pointed arch. Walls were overlapping planks of clapboard or paneling built with the half-timber technique, in which the beams and posts form the visible skeleton on the exterior of the structure. Siding shingles of fish-scale shape were used to face gables, and perforated ornaments were added to the apex of the gable. Verandas were finished with balustrades, soffit grilles and filigree-like scrollwork. Stone cut in various shapes was sometimes used to form a window frame. Leaded, stained glass was used in the arch of windows to form a sunflower pattern.

Distantly related to the Queen Anne fashion was a type of wooden house since dubbed the Shingle Style. The qualities of the stick style are asymmetry and irregularity: the Renaissance cube had given way to spatial movement. The entrance was enfolded by the house, and the whole house was surrounded by the deep veranda. The windows and glass doors were tall and narrow. The roofs were high and jagged and trusses were exposed in diagonal stick work. The posts, plates, and diagonal braces of the veranda created a feeling of spaciousness. Rooms were generally eleven feet or more high, and the spatial aspect was found also in the monumental central hall. The basic aesthetic quality of this style of wooden frame structure was the high, angular skeleton of sticks. The building had a light, matchbox look. Rafters were less visible, and rafter brackets gave an air of lightness.

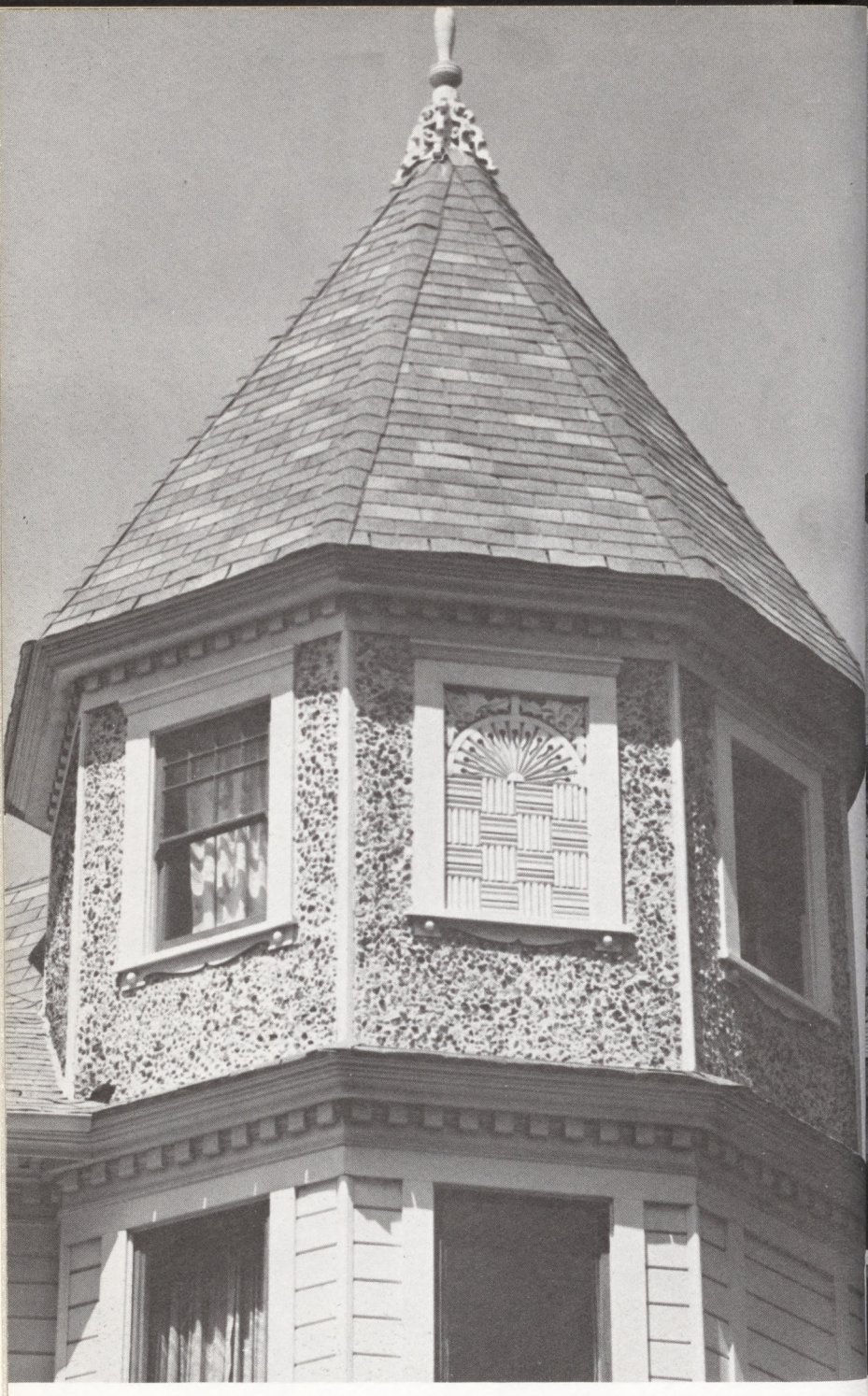
The Victorian Age was one of progress and enlightenment. During this era many of the houses in Ventura County were fashioned after the Victorian style of architecture. An example of one of these homes still stands in regal splendor to the east of Camarillo and can be seen from the highway. Casa Camarillo was built during the nineteenth century, a period in which Californian landowners still possessed large tracts of property. The home was built with many features similar to the Queen Anne style of architecture. Frequent use of projecting wings, bays and wide verandas give the exterior a freedom of appearance, which was also typical of the feelings that the people had enjoyed during the carefree Rancho Period in California.

The Camarillo ranch is part of Rancho Calleguas which was granted by Governor Alvarado in 1837; and 9,998.29 acres were patented to Gabriel Ruiz in 1866. Juan Camarillo had come to California with the Hijar-Padres Party and settled in Ventura in 1857. He purchased the rancho on September 22, 1875 from the Ruiz family. Adolfo Camarillo inherited Rancho Camarillo from his father and mother, and he prospered as a farmer. He married Isabel Menchaca in 1888, and they moved into their Victorian home in 1892. Although Adolfo kept a diary from 1887 to 1896, only two entries refer to the house:

> February 4, 1891. G. H. and myself layed shakes on the new home. I hanged the door.
>
> December 29. G. H. took me to Montalvo and there I took the train to Ventura and from there I went to Los Angeles, to buy carpets for the new house.

But there are numerous references to life on the rancho, and the many visitors who enjoyed the hospitality of the Camarillo house. Its present hostess, Carmen Camarillo Jones, says that the rancho was the site for many rodeos, branding, roping, horsemanship bouts and steers' head barbecues. The eyes of the steer was a delicacy which was offered to the guest of honor. Many important men of state attended the

Variety of millwork on corners and between floors

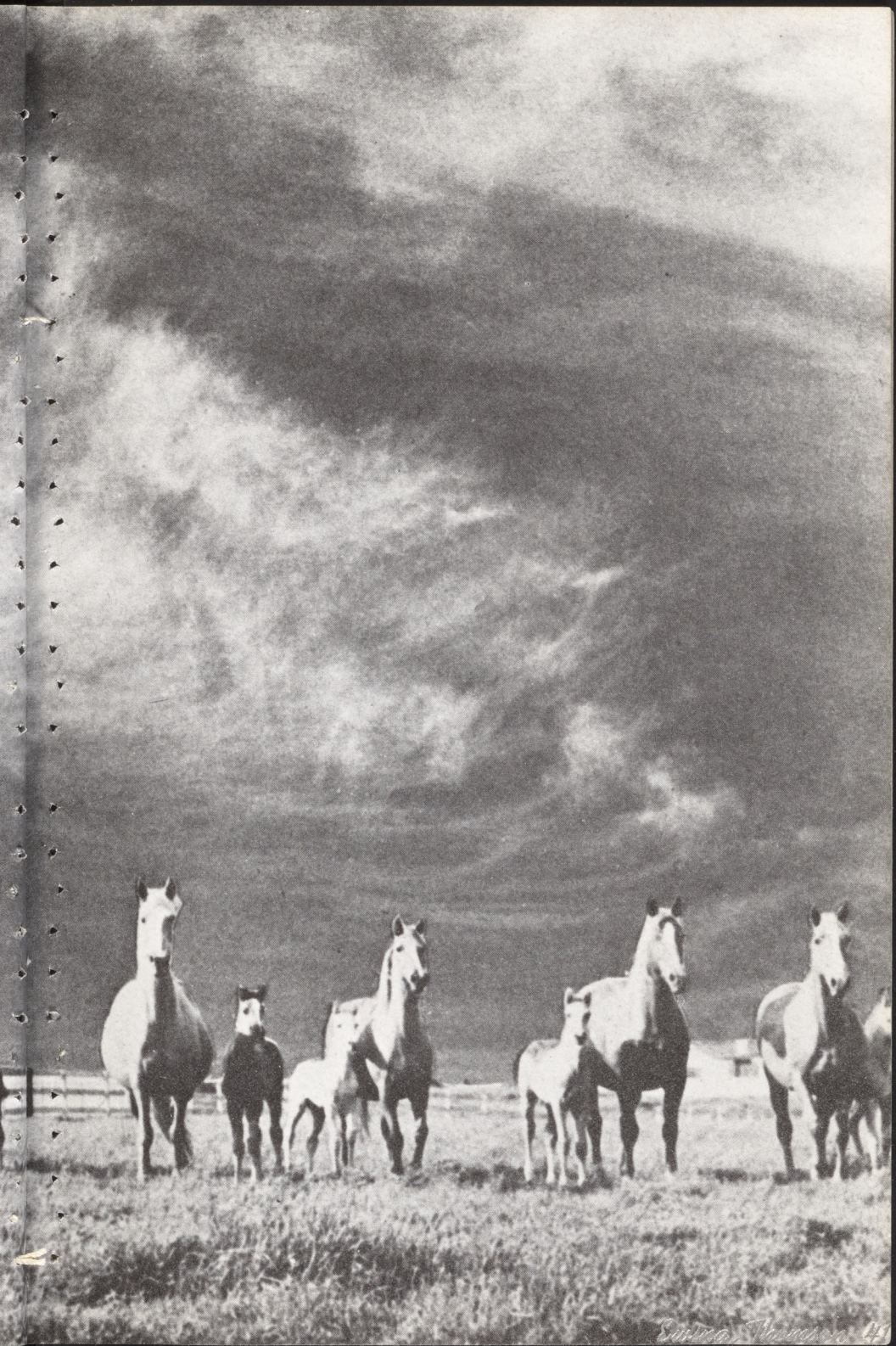


Both stone and wood on the tower

Many windows supported the low tower

Candle snuffer topped the detail on the look-out porch

Verandas graced with balustrades and arches



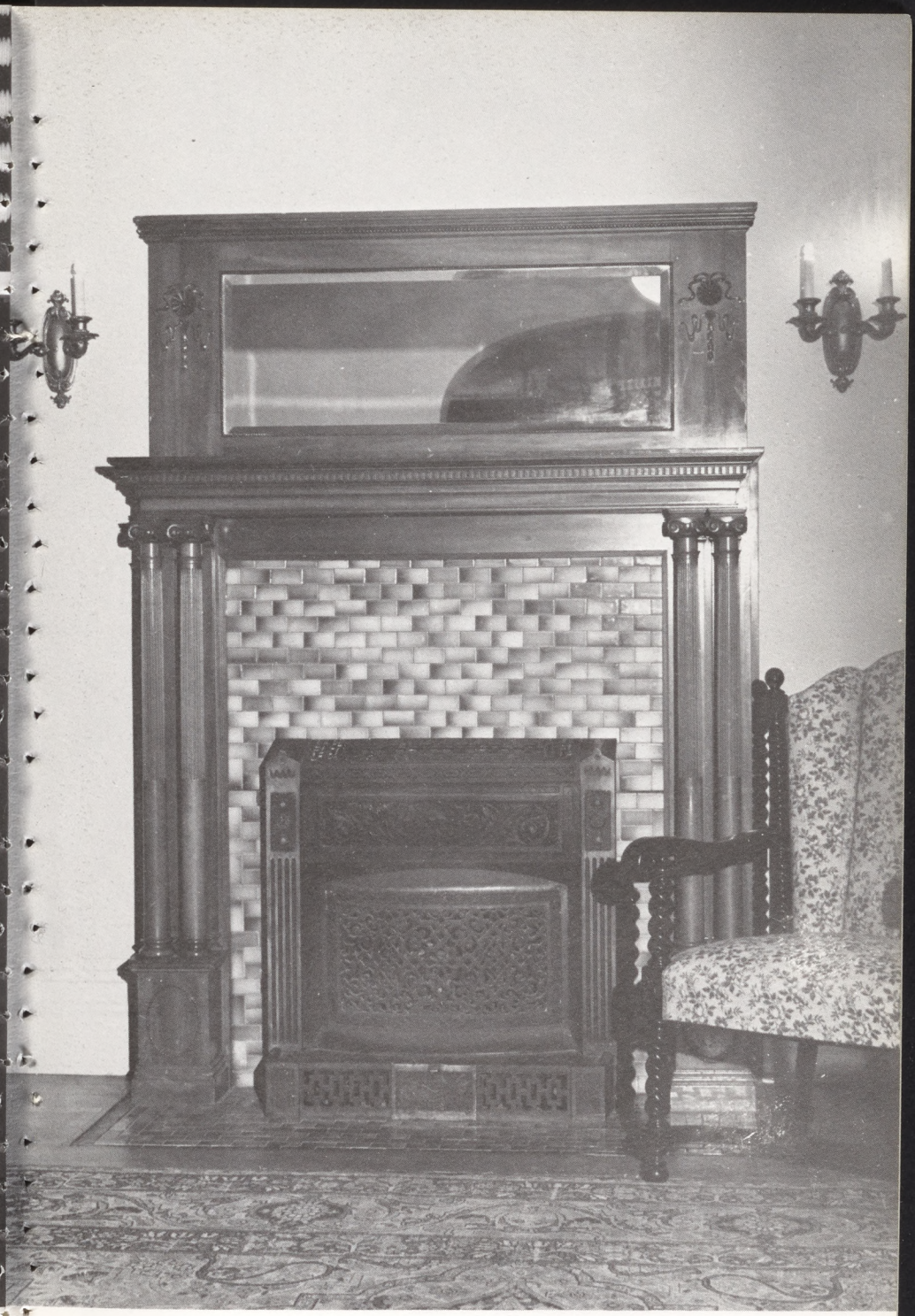
Carmen Camarillo Jones stands at the lower landing

annual barbecues which were held in the shade of the row of pepper trees to the rear of the house.

As travelers and visitors pass the double row of gum eucalyptus trees and enter the large circular driveway of Camarillo Rancho, they have an excellent view of the lovely Victorian house which was designed by Herman Anlauf, a prominent architect in Santa Paula. The Camarillo house is similar to the voluptuously rounded Queen Anne style of architecture. Projecting sections and bays added complexity to the roof line. Irregularity of outline was further enhanced by the porticoes which grace the west and south side of the house. The slender, round tower was capped by a steep hexagonal roof. A similar treatment, but with a low pitch to the roof, was given to the roof covering the second story bay window which faced west. A conical, or candle-snuffer, roof covered the second-story look-out porch. The pointed termination on the three spires was decorated with Gothic-style crockets. The tower walls were half-timbered, and the areas between were filled with plaster and bits of stone and pebbles. The siding shingles above the lookout porch were of fish-scale shape. The remainder of the house had clapboard siding. The spacious, wide veranda was enclosed by balustrades with a panel of perforated circles just below the hand rail. The balustrades were repeated at the soffit, near the ceiling. The supporting posts terminated into arches, which had drop, circular pendants added for more decoration.

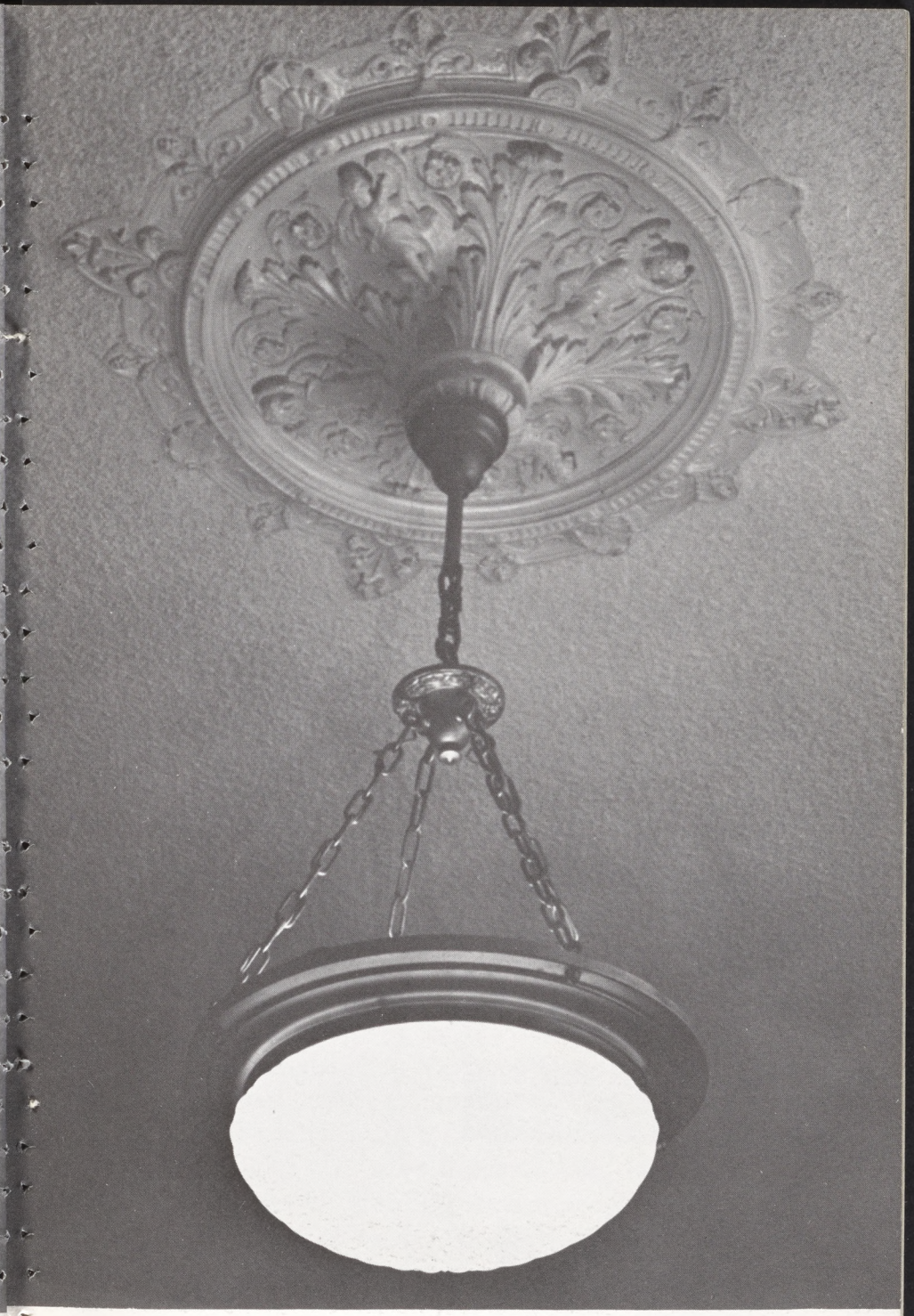
Upon entering the double doors of Casa Camarillo, the guest faces a large reception room with an open stairway leading upstairs. The squared columns are set off by a balustrade of bracket-like spindles. Originally, the stairway had extended directly from the second floor toward the front entrance doors. In 1913 a wedding for one of the Camarillo daughters prompted the building of the present landings with natural pine. A corner of the reception room contains a

Fretwork and stained glass for the alcove



Glass, wood, glaze, iron and tile fireplace

Large chandelier with a square outline



Small chandelier with a rosette

Walk-in refrigerator

cozy alcove, the lowest level of the tower. Wood fretwork in geometric patterns lines the ceiling of the alcove entrance. A large stained glass window is the center of attention, surrounded by several clear windows which were once decorated with fine lace curtains and heavy striped side draperies. The alcove seats were covered with the same striped fabric. Space under the seats was used for much needed storage. The hardwood floors of the two parlors, front office, dining room, and breakfast room were originally covered with wall to wall carpeting of a large, red rose design.

The second parlor has the largest fireplace and was decorated with wood-carved Ionic columns and ceramic tile. A mirror spans the top of this fireplace. Electric light brackets on each side have replaced the original gas light fixtures. The chair is a good example of the popular spirally-turned woodwork used in the Victorian period, and a delicate rose pattern was used for the tapestry fabric.

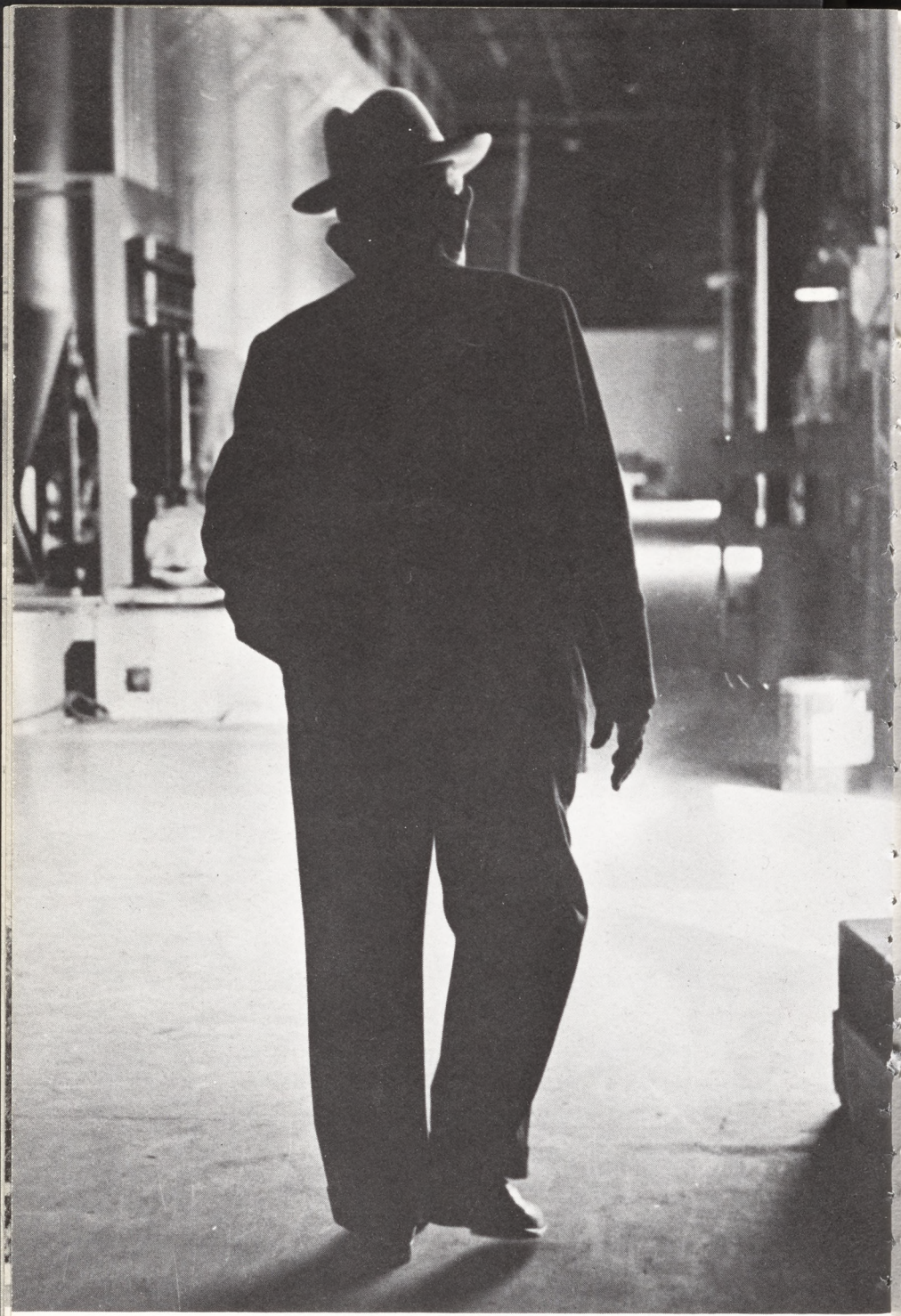
The Camarillo family used the spacious dining room for family meals. The ceiling chandelier is a pendant unit made of pewter. The pewter chains balance a circular base which once supported gas lights. The sculptured ceiling rosette has a square outer contour decorated with grapeleaf motifs and birds. Another room employed a rounded format. A second staircase led from the bedrooms to the adjoining breakfast room. Here Adolfo Camarillo expected everyone to be fully dressed when they came down in the morning.

Walk-in refrigerator

In 1915 Adolfo Camarillo attended the San Francisco World Fair and saw one of the first electric refrigerators on display. He purchased a walk-in refrigerator which was built by Kirchner Supply Company of Los Angeles. It was placed near the kitchen on the laundry porch. Mrs. Jones recalls that about one steer a month was butchered and placed in the freezer to feed the sixteen people on the ranch. Early in the spring of each year around Easter time lambs were also butchered and a barbecue was soon to follow.

Bunya tree

Original wallpaper and gas in the attic



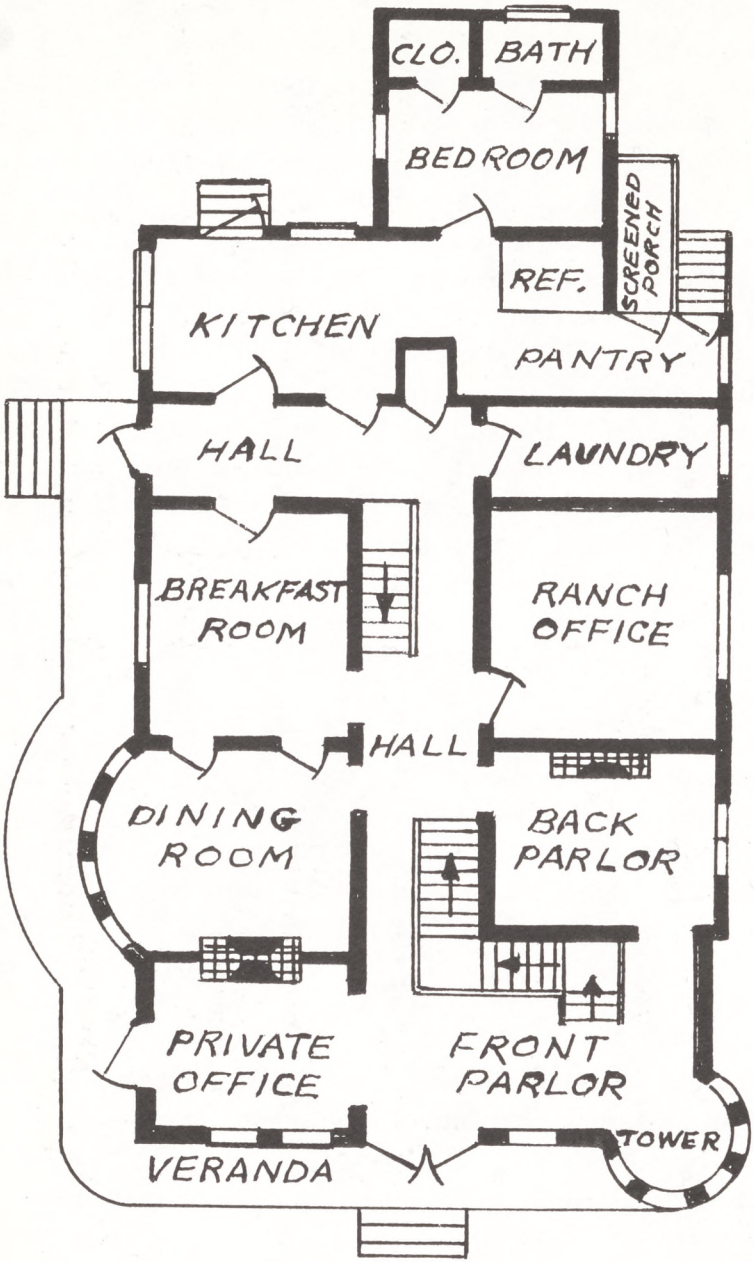
Adolfo checks up

The look-out porch on the second floor allowed a beautiful view of the grounds. The view included a Bunya tree which was planted in 1891, the year the house was completed. When celotex 235-lb. asphalt shingles were put on the roof in 1966, it took 105 squares of shingles, five days, and a crew of three workmen to complete the job. Cost and durability of roofing over a painted wood shingle roof were factors in the selection of shingles that would still retain the feeling of a glamourous past.

In the corner of the attic was a small hidden playroom with a bed and dresser. The wallpaper has been untouched since the turn of the century. A small gaslight fixture can still be seen on the wall. The Camarillo girls spent long hours playing house on rainy days in this room. They recall other days when they were permitted to sleep in the screened-in porch which was added onto the second floor of the house; later it was closed in and made into a bedroom. The extension of the floor below was fronted by a large picture window.

Lighting for the home was produced in the gas house which was near the large barn but has since burned down. The barn still remains standing and was once used to store grain and to house the carriages. It was here that Adolfo Camarillo began the day when he inspected the horses which had been saddled, ready for riding.

When Adolfo Camarillo attended the Sacramento State Fair in 1922, he purchased a fine Arabian-Morgan stallion named Sultan. This was the beginning of the line of famous Camarillo white horses which have been featured in many California parades. They were the van in San Francisco when the Golden Gate Bridge was opened. Sultan died in 1935 at twenty-three years of age and was the first burial in a graveyard behind the tack room. The herd includes four or five mares and seven horses are kept trained for parades. They are ridden by members of the Camarillo family, keep-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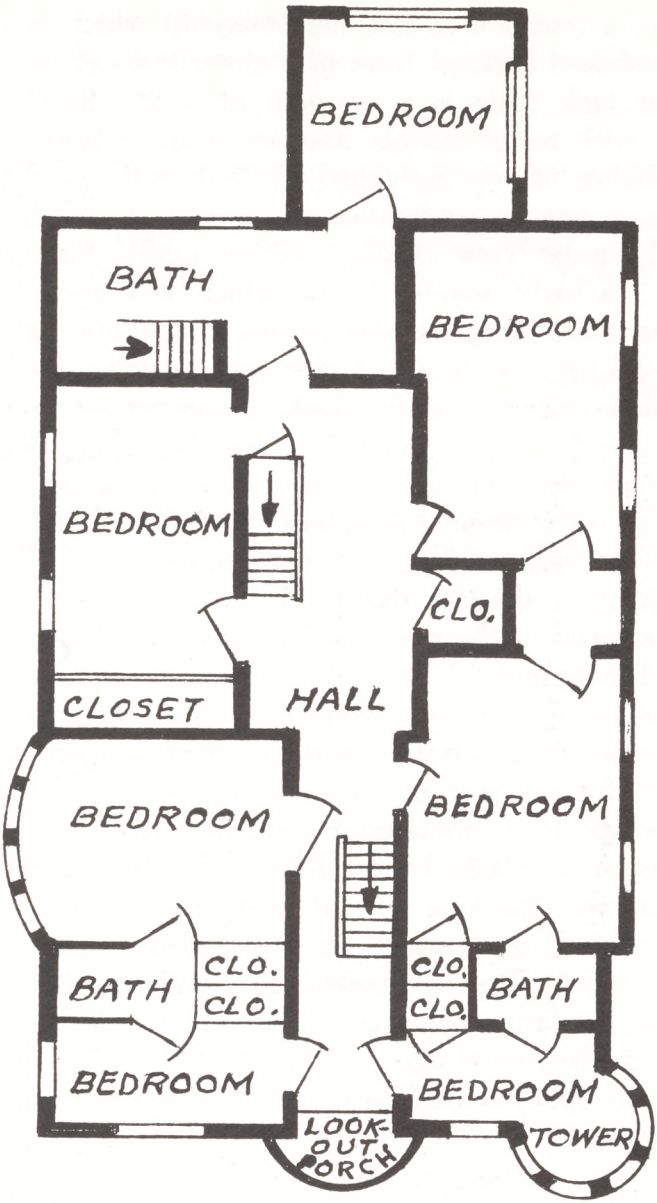
FRONT PARLOR
TOWER
VERANDA

FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

ing alive a tradition of fine horsemanship which has been continued as a heritage from past generations of the Dons.

The tack room is a museum in itself. Seven silver saddles with tooled leather and seven silver bridles, each horse having his own individual bridle from the time he was trained, are kept in excellent condition in the tack room. The original Visalia Tree Saddle used by Adolfo Camarillo is there. An early Spanish bridle which was handmade of leather is also on display. Mrs. Jones pointed out that copies of the Spanish silver bridles do not have the half-moon ring of silver circles and the small indentation on the hardware that secures the bridle bit and reins. Another interesting relic in the tack room was a fine hair rope used for the reins of the horse. The original reins were made by a blind woman in Ventura years ago and have been preserved. Leather reatas hang on the tack room wall.

Memories of the past are kept alive at Rancho Camarillo. The beautiful Victorian home and trees and gardens surrounding it are in good condition. The white Camarillo horses groomed and trained and the silver saddles polished, all ready for riding in parades. Still another tradition was taking shape as we prepared to leave the ranch. Mrs. Jones was busy making telephone calls to inform the other family members that the long ears of white corn would soon be ready for making tamales. Each year they get together to prepare tamales from the special brand of corn grown from seed that her father had secured from the San Buenaventura Mission padres years ago.

A day spent at Rancho Camarillo was truly a nostalgic occasion.

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San Buenaventura Bicentennial 1876 and 1976

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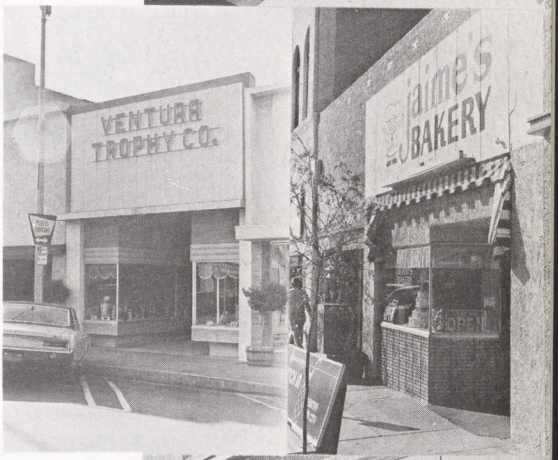

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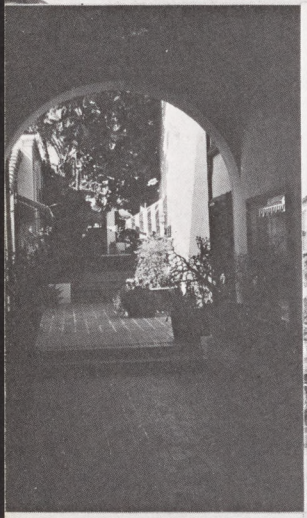

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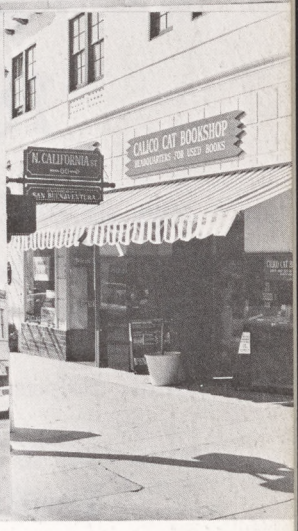

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Richard R. Esparza, Assistant Secretary and Manager

The *Quarterly* is published from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer Museum. The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. Grant W. Heil is Editor and the Staff includes Mrs. Naydean L. Baker, Bill Ballas, Duane L. Garber, Charles H. Heil, Ruth L. Heil, David W. Hill, Charles D. MacGregor, Charles F. Outland, Mrs. Johanna D. Overby, Thomas A. Roe and Richard D. Willett.

Thirty-six hundred copies printed for the Downtown Improvement District and The Ventura County Historical Society by Clark's Printing Co., Ventura, California. Additional copies are available at $2.00 each.

The Ventura County Historical Society *Quarterly*

Vol. XXI, No. 2 Winter 1976

Grant W. Heil, Editor

Notice

The contemporary photographs on the four endpages are arranged to show the advance of Downtown Business up Main, down the side streets and along the front. They were taken by Thomas Roe, and Duane Garber made up the montage. The Ventura County Historical Museum has the pictures of John Calvin Brewster and the files of *The Signal.* David Hill copied and mounted the advertisements. The map of old Ventura was drawn by Bill Ballas.

Contents

VENTURA'S BUSINESS MEN

From The Ventura *Signal*[1]

We found time during the week for a run through our business houses and for a few moments conversation, commencing with **Messrs. Martinez & Co.,** corner Cañada[2] and Main Streets. This firm has been doing business in our city for several years and now occupies one of the oldest business stands in the county, formerly and for many years occupied by Mr. Gayou, now in France. Messrs. Martinez & Co. always keep up with the times, having on hand for their customers the best lines of groceries, clothing, boots and shoes, etc. Theirs is the nearest stand to the people of the Avenue and is largely patronized by them. Emelio C. Ortega is the junior partner and is a member of one of the oldest and best known families in southern California.

Agent for Leading First-Class Instrumonts.

GRAND, SQUARE AND UPRIGHT PIANOS OF

Steinway & Sons | Kranich & Bach

NEW YORK.

C. RO ENISCH AND ERNST KAPS, DRESDEN ; J. ZECH, S. F.

FIRST-CLASS **Pianos AND Organs For Rent**

Musical Instruments of Every Description.

Importer of American and Foreign

BOOKS

AND

STATIONERY

As well as

SHEET MUSIC,

Music books and all kinds of

Musical Merchandise,

Sheet Music, Books and Stationery.

THE CELEBRATED **Horace Water Organs**

Max Enderlein, Ag't for Ventura County

DEPOT AT C. J. EDSON'S, EAST MAIN STREET.

Instruments Sold on Easy Installments

Our next visit was to the music room and piano and organ agency of **Max Enderlein,** north side of West Main Street. Mr. Enderlein is a first class musician, has had a finished musical education, is a thorough teacher and progresses his pupils rapidly, at the same time insisting upon thoroughness. His schools have been eminently successful. He gives lessons on the piano or organ, either at the house or at his rooms. He has for sale the most popular make of pianos, and will sell on easy and reasonable terms. An upright piano which he has now on hand is a beauty, and cheap too. Next above we enter the livery stable of **Peter Constantia.** In this establishment will be found every convenience for tired and hungry horses, and a fine outfit of livery stock and buggies and carriages. Don Peter

FRUTERIA.

VENTURA FRUIT STORE.

F. MARTINEZ & Co.

Old City Hall, Main St., S B Ventura.

KEEPS Constantly on hand all kinds of Fruits, Home and Imported; dried, green and canned, also genuine Havana Cigars and a

General Stock of Groceries.

SANTA CLARA HOUSE,

SAN BUENAVENTURA, CAL.

JOHNSON & SUTTON - - - PROPRIETORS.

THIS POPULAR HOUSE HAS been entirely renovated by the new proprietors, who are experienced hotel-keepers. They will keep a good house, and will spare no pains to make their guests comfortable. Charges moderate.

☞It is the office of the Coast Line Stage company. 3-45-tf

SALOON.

BAUTISTO YSOARDY,

Main Street San Buenaventura.

Best quality of CIGARS, LIQUORS AND

BILLIARDS. 1tf

Santa Clara

LIVERY, SALE AND FEED

STABLES.

Main Street, San Buenaventura,

KEEP CONSTANTLY ON HAND SINgle and Double Teams, and best and most reliable Saddle Horses.

☞Stock boarded by the day week or month.

PRIVATE CARRIAGES

With or without driver, for the use of families and pleasure excursions.

Our prices are fixed to correspond with the times, and we ask the public to come and try our stock. P. CONSTANTIA, Prop'r.

is always courteous to customers and a pleasant gentleman to deal with. Crossing over to the south side of Main Street we find Mr. W. L. Johnson, the popular and accommodating landlord of the **Santa Clara House;** and Mrs. Sutton, the landlady, equally popular in her department, always ready to receive guests. Our young friend Ed Wagner, the clerk, is always doing his best for the comfort of patrons of the house. It takes but a moment to go over to **Escandon's** where the best of native wines and other liquors and fine imported cigars are kept. Thence down a few steps in the same block we find the **Schiappa Pietra Brothers,** men who years ago came poor boys to this country. They have each stood by the other, and have all accummulated fortunes. They own large flocks of sheep and one of

Santa Clara House

NEW SALOON.

A. G. Escandon

TAKES PLEASURE IN INforming his patrons and friends that he has reopened his saloon, at his old stand on Main street, where he keeps the choicest brands of wines, liquors and cigars. As Mr. E. manufactures his own wines and brandies on his rancho, he warrants them to be superior to anything in the market. A **FIRST-CLASS BILLIARD TABLE, and a quiet, orderly house.** iii5tf

AYERS' HOTEL.

West Main st., San Buenaventura.

WM. AYERS, - - - - - PROPRIETOR.

THE PROPRIETOR OF THIS NEW and elegant hotel feels warranted in saying that his accommodations are unsurpassed on the southern coast. The hotel is especially desirable as a stopping place for tourists. Centrally located. 35tf

LEON CERF

HAS MOVED INTO HIS

NEW STAND IN SPEAR'S BLOCK,

AND HAS OPENED OUT AS GOOD A STOCK OF

GENERAL MERCHANDISE

AS WAS EVER BROUGHT TO

SAN BUENAVENTURA,

CONSISTING OF

Dry Goods, Groceries,
Queensware, Glasswre,
Fancy Goods, Boots & Shoes,
Iron, Coal,
Hardware, Etc.

And is ready to accommodate everybody with whatever they want.

A. SCHIAPPAPIETRA,

DEALER IN

GENERAL MERCHANDISE

Sanchez Block, Main Street,

San Buenaventura.

THIS OLD AND WELL known house keeps its usual large and well selected stock of everything usually kept in a General Merchandise store in the way of Staple and Fancy Groceries, Dry Goods, Notions, etc. Consisting in part of

DRIED FRUITS,

SUGARS, COFFES, TEAS, CANNED GOODS,

and all kinds of Groceries;

Boots, Shoes,
Hats, Caps,
Rope, Nails,
Ready-Made Clothing.
Agriculturists' Tools,
Wooden Ware, &c.,

And all things needed by all sorts of peopl

COME AND SEE MY STOCK

ANTONIO SCHIAPPAPIETRA.

the best, if not the best, ranch in the country. Their store has for years been a favorite with old settlers. The block they occupy is known as the Sanchez Block,[3] built many years since and rebuilt not long ago and finished in good style. **J. B. Ysoardy** on the south side of the street, who is now finishing up the finest building in the city, is as well known to our readers as the mission itself. His brands of wines, liquors and cigars are not excelled in any market. Our next stopping place was the **Ayers Hotel,** as good a stopping place as can be found. Al and John are always at their posts, and no

John Calvin Brewster

guest ever leaves the house dissatisfied. The founder of the house, Wm. Ayers, is the oldest hotel man in the city; and his experience accounts for the popularity of the house. Adjoining the mission church is the establishment of our excellent photographer, **Brewster,** a man who though in a small town keeps pace with the times, is posted in all the modern improvements and has the best instruments in use for his business. The ugliest may without fear apply to him for he has a camera that cannot be broken, though it has been severely tried several times. He can transfer your features to paper; and when you look upon it, you will be sure to be pleased. From Brewster's where we could have been pleasantly entertained an hour or more longer in looking at his stereoscopic views and pictures we crossed over to the south side again where convenient to the hotels, on the corner of Figueroa and Main, we find the first-class meat market of the **Detroy Brothers.** The brothers, Joe and George, came

CALIFORNIA MARKET!

WEST MAIN STREET,

SAN BUENAVENTURA.

—

DETROY BROTHERS

BUTCHERS,

AND DEALERS IN ALL KINDS OF

BUTCHERS' MEATS.

—

FRESH AND CORNED BEEF, Mutton, Pork, Sausages and other Meats always on hand, and guaranteed, pure, healthy, fresh and good which we sell in large or small quantities, and at the very lowest market rates.

Orders from the Country

solicited and promptly filled.

HENRY SPEAR,

DEALER IN

WINES, LIQUORS & CIGARS,

Main st., San Buenaventura.

I KEEP A FIRST-CLASS ASSORTMENT of the above articles, and my patrons may rest assured of enjoying quiet and comfort when they call upon me.

Brewster's

Art Gallery

Main St, near the Catholic Church.

Photographs,
Sun-Pearls,
Ambrotypes,

and all the various styles of pictures made. and finished to suit the most fastidious taste. Pictures of Children by the

Lightning Process.

"Suffer Little Children to Come" soon after they awake from their morning slumber, say from 10 a. m. to 2 p. m.

Attention is directed to my large and varied assortment of

VIEWS OF NATURAL SCENERY

embracing almost every object of interest in the county. They can always be had at Brewster's. The very

Latest Styles of Frames

all sizes, always on sale at less than San Francisco prices. EVERY GOOD PICTURE SHOULD BE FRAMED.

ALL WORK WARRANTED.

—

Think not these pictures like a shadow fade,
Though shades they are by sunlight made,
For when the lip of flesh in dust shall lie,
And death o'erspread the spirit-speaking eye,
These life-like pictures, mocking a decay,
Will then be fresh and vivid as to-day.

Respectfully,

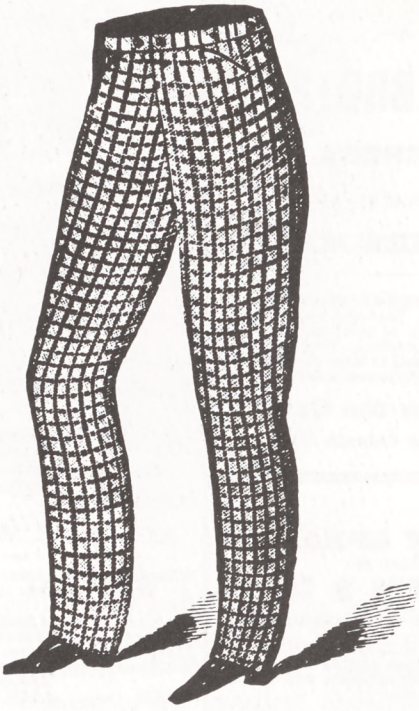
15tf J. C. BREWSTER.

here a few years ago with but little money. They have both, by sticking close to business, acquired enough to place them away up on the assessment roll. Neither of them has an enemy in the county; and the reputation of the firm for fair dealing and generosity to the poor is indeed enviable and worth more than riches. **Isadore Feder's** tailor shop, the only one in town, was our next stopping place. Mr. Feder does good and faithful work, and may always be found at his post. The next door may be found **Leon Cerf** with whose face every man, woman and child in Ventura County is familiar. For years he did business in San Buenaventura, then moved to Hueneme where

ISADORE FEDER,

TAILOR AND CLOTHIER

CUSTOM WORK A SPECIALTY.



CUSTOM WORK A SPECIALTY.

NORTH SIDE OF EAST MAIN ST.

A well-selected assortment of

GENT'S CLOTHING AND FURNISHING GOODS

Constantly on hand. 32tf

he also did an immense business in the buying of grain and general merchandising. Mr. Cerf is a nervous, quick, energetic business man, prompt and reliable, with social qualities to make him popular with his customers. He always keeps the best goods and sells at

Figueroa to Palm Streets

VENTURA

LIVERY SALE AND FEED
STABLES.

Main Street, opposite Spear's Block.
HALL & YARBROUGH, Proprietors

WE TAKE THIS METHOD OF INforming everybody in general, and the people of this town in particular, that we keep a first-class stable, where good Riding Horses, and fine Single and Double

Buggies and Carriages

are always in condition for
BUSINESS OR PLEASURE.

All kinds of stock kept by the day, week or month.
Our charges are always reasonable, and we spare no pains to make our customers safe and comfortable.

RANDOLPH & WINCH

Manufacturers of all kinds of

CARRIAGES AND WAGONS

of the best materials.

THEY ALSO KEEP IN STOCK BUGgies, Light Spring, and Heavy Wagons, of their own make, which they warrant in every respect. They are determined to sell their work at prices as low as the inferior work that is frequently palmed off on the community of Ventura and elsewhere.

Blacksmiths Throughout the County

can be supplied with all kinds of Bodies, Wheels and Gearing of the Latest Patterns and of the best material at San Francisco Prices.

Horse-Shoing and General Jobbing

promptly attended to.
47tf RANDOLPH & WINCH.

one price. A. S. Clark is his popular head clerk. Passing into the next door in the same block we find, in a good humor as he always is, **Henry Spear.** Mr. Spear was one of the first men to build a brick in the town. He had confidence then that the town would grow into a city, and that his block would pay him a good interest on the money invested. In this block is the public hall[4] of the place, which Mr. Spear almost always generously lets free of charge to every meeting in the interest of the town or of any charitable enterprise. The Masons, Odd Fellows and Jannisaries of Light have a hall in the same building. His saloon is well ordered and quiet; and in it may be found the best of wines and liquors, saying nothing of the fine cigars. His billiard table is first-class. Opposite Spear's is the brick blacksmith shop of **Steve Randolph** where the kickingest bronco alive can be shod. Next door to Steve is the depot for the **Ventura Brewery,** a home institution, where Hartman makes as good lager as is made south of San Francisco; and everybody takes it these hot days. Across the street, east, is the livery stable of **Hall & Yarbrough,** formerly Jones & Hall, where horses will be well fed and cared for and where safe buggy and saddle horses are kept for hire. The proprietors are accommodating gentlemen, and make it a point to please their customers. The crowd of people on the other side attracts our attention, and upon going over we find it to be the customers coming out and going into those two large establishments of Einstein & Bernheim and Chaffee & McKeeby. **Messrs. Chaffee**

Ventura Brewery!

BEER

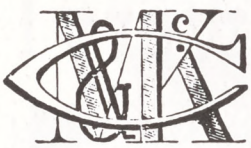
BEER

F. HARTMAN, Proprietor.

The Best, Coolest, and Most Delicious Beer Manufactured South of San Francisco. Orders for Beer by the KEG OR BOTTLE promptly attended to.
Beer delivered in any part of the town or county FREE OF CHARGE.

29-tf.

& McKeeby, on the corner of Palm and Main, first did business on the north side of Main in the old adobe,[5] but soon found to accommodate their rapidly increasing trade that they must erect a building adequate to their wants, which they did on what had been in old times the threshing ground of the old mission, where all the grain and beans were threshed by driving horses and cattle over the straw. Mr. Chaffee is one of the first American settlers of the place, and has always been successful: has an eye to business constantly; and though full of business (being President of the Santa Ana Water Company and largely interested in other enterprises) does not allow care to harass him or wear upon him in the least. Mr. McKeeby has also been long a resident of the Pacific Coast. He came here from Nevada and soon went into business, and for his urbanity and calmness of judgment became marked immediately as one of our rising men in business. The members of the firm are assisted in the store by Geo. S. Gilbert, Jr. (their confidential clerk and bookkeeper) E. A. Duval, Thos. Gilbert, Dick Wright and D. C. Dean. Everything that a farmer, stock raiser, mechanic or housekeeper wants can be found on their shelves and counters or in their warehouses.



NEW GOODS

RECEIVED BY EVERY STEAMER,

—AND—

PRICES TO SUIT THE TIMES!

We keep the best and most constantly renewed stock of

General Merchandise

to be had in the County.

If you want your money's worth, you can alwayg get it at

CHAFFEE & M'KEEBY'S.

The next room, that of **Einstein & Bernheim,** is the largest one in southern California used for general merchandising. M. Einstein of San Francisco, an educated merchant, is the principal: a man who has by his energy and perseverance built up a trade wherever he has established himself. He has an interest in one of the largest

Geo. Gilbert, Jr., R. G. Surdam and Dick Wright

houses in San Francisco and in several stores in the interior, is a man of keen foresight and shrewdness and deals fairly with all. His partner, A. Bernheim, is an industrious, able, and popular merchant. He is a man who makes no enemies, treats all impartial: is as polite to the humblest as the highest. They keep an immense stock of goods and the live, energetic, and popular salesmen (Messrs. Granger, Gug-

Henry Guggenheim

genheim, Charlebois and Herne) can get rid of them as fast as any men in the place. This firm has recently erected a handsome dwelling on the corner of Santa Clara and Palm Streets, which is an ornament to the town. Next door are the **Bartlett Brothers,** jewelers and stationers, formerly of Adrian, Michigan. They are young men of good habits, and attend closely to a business they both understand. At their stand may always be found musical instruments, all grades of stationery, the latest periodicals, books, and elegant jewelry, silverware of all kinds, etc. The store of the Bartletts is a music emporium, and frequently in passing the sweetest strains greet the ear. They have constantly on hand the Standard Organs so that the purchaser may not have to wait for one to be ordered. The barber shop of **Mr. Reitzke** across the street is where you can get an elegant bath, and a clean and easy shave for a small consideration. Again we come back, attracted by **Mrs. Sturtevant's** elegant show window wherein always may be found samples of the latest styled

NEW DRY GOODS,
NEW CLOTHING,
NEW HATS,
NEW BOOTS AND SHOES.

In fact the most complete and be steelested new stock of

GENERAL MERCHANDISE

Ever brought to this market, at

EINSTEIN & BERNHEIM'S.

Look at the Fine New Stock.

GREAT BARGAINS
FOR the HOLIDAYS.

QUICK SALES and SMALL PROFITS is our Motto

hats, bonnets and ladies' fancy goods. Mrs. S. is a deserving lady, and keeps the best of goods. **Barnett's** stone building and glass front catches our eyes; and the click of the billiard balls on an elegant table are heard as we enter. The room is well furnished; and Bill's customers are always served with dispatch and courtesy. The house is orderly and quiet. Again we cross to the south side to gaze upon the heaps of twenties and rolls of silver in the **Ventura**

Palm to Oak Streets

WINES, LIQUORS & CIGARS

Wm. BARNETT

— HAS REMOVED TO —

His New Brick Building,
North Side Main Street,
(Opposite the Bank.)

Where he keeps constantly on hand the best brands of

Wines, Liquors, Cigars, Etc.

A FIRST-CLASS

BILLIARD TABLE

Is in the house, and everything provided to emak the house a pleasant sort.

BARTLETT BROTHERS' WATCHES
AND
THE DIAMOND SPECTACLES
ARE BEST.

Silverware, School Books Nobby Styles OF Stationery, Chess & Checker Boards,

Clocks, Blank Books, Playing AND Calling Cards, Holliday Books,

MEMORANDUMS, DIARIES, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.
AGENTS FOR ALL OF THE
BEST PIANOS AND ORGANS.
SOLE AGENTS FOR
WEBER PIANOS, STANDARD ORGANS,
And the GENUINE ROMAN STRINGS.
BARTLETT BROTHERS.
[3tf]

Th. Rietzke,

LADIES' HAIR DRESSER

AND

Importer of Human Hair.

Residence, in Mrs. Bradley's house, on Palm street, between Santa Clara and Meta.

LATEST STYLES OF

Ornamental Hair Work

always on hand.

Puffs, Braids, Curls, Frizzes, and Hair Jewelry made to order.

Switches, Every Shade, from $5 to $40.

All work guaranteed first-class, and equal to that done anywhere.
51tf

Bank. A newspaper man can, in these critical times, only look and long for what he has not. But then there is nothing like making a show of having plenty of money, so we remained long at the counter. Doubtless many of the passers-by supposed we were making a heavy deposit. Not so, we were only taking notes (not promissory notes) of the bank and its surroundings. The building is an elegant one of brick, with a vault inferior to none in the state in which is an immense burglar and fireproof safe. The bank is in a flourishing condition, and has now 20 percent of its capital stock paid in. All the stockholders stand ready to pay in another assessment at any

THE BANK OF VENTURA.

Main St, San Buenaventura, Cal.

Capital Stock, $250,000.00

OFFICERS:

L. SNODGRASS, : : President.
J. M. BROOKS, : : Vice Pres't.
M. H. CAY, : : : : : Cashier.

DIRECTORS:

L. Snodgrass, | W. S. Chaffee,
D. S. Blackburn, | J. M. Brooks,
C. W. Chrisman, | Thos. R. Bard,
M. H. Cay.

CORRESPONDENTS.

The First National Gold Bank, S. F.

TRANSACT A GENERAL COMMERcial banking business. Prompt attention given to collections. Interest allowed on time deposits. 38tf

NEW BARBER SHOP.

J. V. SANCHEZ, - - - - PROPRIETOR

MY OLD FRIENDS WILL NOW FIND me established in my new shop, in front of the "Golden Gate," where, with an entire wne outfit, I am prepared to minister to their wants in my line J. V. SANCHEZ.

TO THE LADIES

THE UNDERSIGNED WOULD respectfully call your attention to her new and

FASHIONABLE STOCK OF MILLINERY,

and FANCY GOODS; also LADIES' FURNISHING GOODS, and a choice variety of fabric for INFANTS' WEAR. Trimmings, Embroidery Silks, Braids, Java Canvass, Worsteds, and other materials for Ladies' Fancy Work will be kept constantly on hand.

Thread Aplique and Valenciennes Lace a Specialty

As those who make the first purchases will be enabled to make the best selections, we hope for your earliest favors, and shall ever be pleased to show you our goods, though you may not desire to purchase. Most respectfully,

Mrs. J. L. Sturtevant.

Corner of Main and Oak sts.

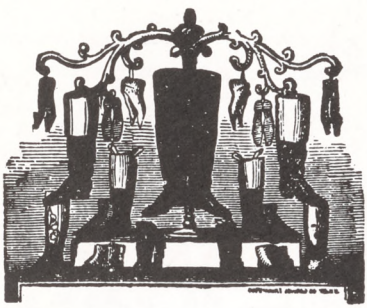
N. B.—One of the greatest blessings ever bequeathed to humanity is

BUTTERICK'S
CELEBRATED
PATTERNS,

for which we have the agency.
iiin6 J. L. S.

time. L. Snodgrass, the president, M. H. Gay, cashier, and Henry Clay[6] (late a banker of Adrian) assistant cashier, run the bank to the entire satisfaction of the association and the community. Tearing ourself away from the altar of mammon we pass to **Joseph Roth's** boot and shoe store in a brick building on the north side of Main Street, a building erected by Mr. R. for the purpose for which it is now used. Mr. Roth is a man of energy; and one perfectly at home in his business, whether on his bench or at the counter as salesman. His own make of boot is not surpassed anywhere. His stock is carefully selected and made up only by skilled workmen. The ready-made boots and shoes are from the best houses in the East of the latest and best styles. He will invariably give his customers fits when they call upon him. Mrs. Roth is always on hand to wait upon the ladies. Don't pass him if your boots are worn out or need mending. His labors to give a better understanding and a wholeso(u)ledness are appreciated by all who patronize him.

J. ROTH,



Manufacturer of and Dealer in

BOOTS & SHOES,

NORTH SIDE MAIN ST.,

KEEPS CONSTANTLY ON HAND AND makes to order all kinds of Boots and Shoes of the very best material. None but

EXPERIENCED WORKMEN

employed. Boots and Shoes made to order at the lowest rates, and

Good Fits Guaranteed.

☞Boots warranted not to run over.

E. FRANZ,

DEALER IN GROCERIES, provisions, confectionery, fruits, tobacco, cigars and liquors. Keeps always on hand the choicest assortment of everything in his line, including cutlery, perfumery, hosiery, pipes, toys, nuts, etc., etc. Also has always on hand the choicest brands of liquors, and has the EXCLUSIVE AGENCY FOR VENTURA COUNTY of the

PHILADELPHIA ALE,

the best ale made.

EAST MAIN STREET,

next door to the postoffice,

SAN BUENAVENTURA, CAL.

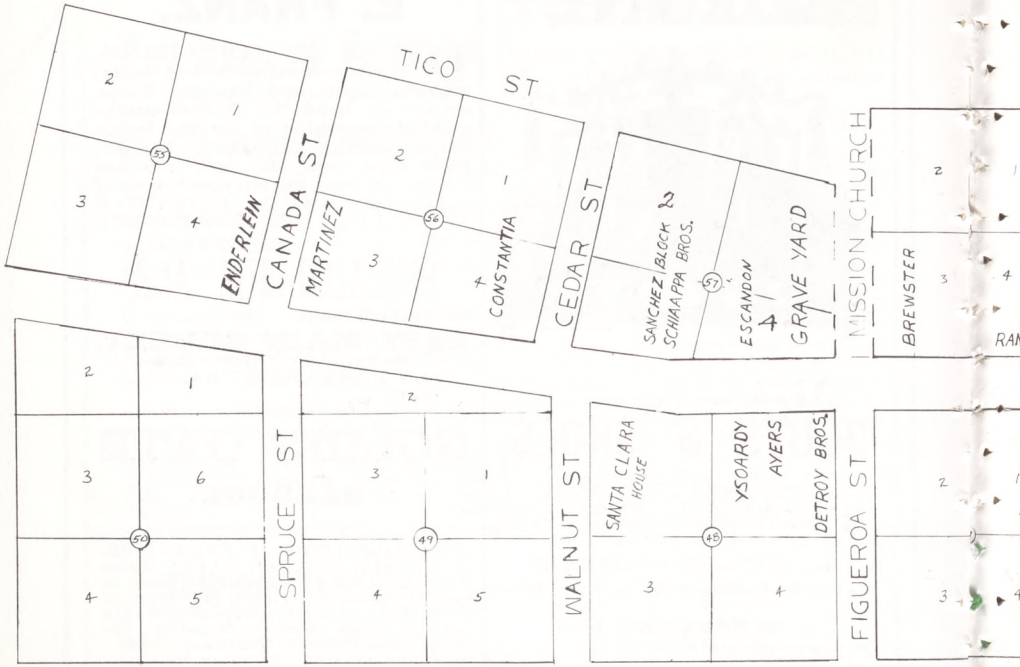
iii16tf

GOLDEN GATE

SALOON.

THE PROPRIETOR OF THE OLD RELIABLE "GOLDEN GATE," wishes to inform his many patrons that he is still on hand at the old with a larger and finer stock of WINES, LIQURS AND CIGARS than was ever before offered to the public. The finest Billiard Tables in the state. 5-tf.

When some men get a new pair of boots at Roth's they always feel like 'wetting'[7] them. If they must do so, across the street is the **Golden Gate** where may be found the wherewithal to do so in any shape desired. Miller & Jones have two superb carom tables which are always in request. This firm has the agency of the celebrated Rockland wines, a full supply of which they always keep on hand. Adjoining the Golden Gate is the neat little barber shop of **Vicinte Sanchez,** where everything is done up in style. After getting washed and combed we proceed to the other side and through **Lewis Edds'** new carpenter shop, designed soon to be filled with stock for a first-lass cabinet shop. Back again on the south side we find ourselves in **Sutcliffe's** harness and saddle shop where we find in Mr. S. an old Chicago man who once found it 'too hot'[8] in that city, and frequently too cold. He is an experienced and courteous salesman, and likes to show his goods which, by the way, are throughout of the best lines and latest styles. He is business all over; and if by accident he has not what you call for, will have it for you as quick as electricity and steam will bring it. Adjoining



MAP OF SAN BUENA VENTURA
ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO
RECONSTRUCTED FROM OLD PRINTS
SHOWING APPROXIMATE SITES
"VENTURA'S BUSINESS MEN"
AS REPORTED IN THE VENTURA SIGNAL.

BLOCKS = 400 FEET SQUARE

POLI ST

RANDOLPH

BREWERY

HALL & YARBROUGH

REITZKE

BARNETT

ROTH

EDDS

EDSON

DALY & HEASLEY

BROOKS

COREY

POPE

QUAST

MAIN ST

FEDER

CERF

SPEAR BLG

PALM ST

CHAFFEE & McNEBY

EINSTEIN & BERNHEIM

BARTLETT BROS

STUKTEVANT

VENTURA BANK

GOLDEN GATE BAR

SANCHEZ

SUTCLIFFE

KUHLMAN

GRIMES

RIGGEN & WAGNER

FRANZ

GOODWIN P.O.

OAK ST

ROTH & ARNAZ

COD. BROWN

SIGNAL PRESS

KAISER & CONNOR

CAMPBELL

GRANT

CALIF. CAFE

TODD

MARKS

PERRY & RIDER

CALIFORNIA ST

RICHARDSON

GRANT

MURRY

LEY BROS.

CHESTNUT ST

SANTA CLARA ST

SAXBY WALTON & PREBLE

HOBSON

BLACK-HAWK

META ST

DALY & ROGERS

LUMBER YARD

FRONT ST

1876

July 4th

6:00 a.m. PREPARATION

100 Discharges of the Cannon

Choir led by Messers. Max Enderlein and E. B. Higgins

Mission bells ring out

10:00 a.m. PROCESSION

R. G. Surdam, Marshall of the Day

Saticoy Band

Monumental Fire Company

Chinese Firemen

Carriages

Displays

Ventura Brass Band

Delegations

Calathumpians[9]

12:00 M. PROGRAMME OF EXERCISES

M. H. Gay, President of the Day

Hail Columbia

Prayer by Rev. W. A. Knighten, Chaplain

Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean

Declaration of Independence read by C. E. Murray

Star Spangled Banner

History of Ventura County compiled by W. D. Hobson

Yankee Doodle

Oration by C. T. Meredith

Afternoon FESTIVITIES

Free Dinner

Methodist Church Dinner

Evening ENTERTAINMENT

Egbert's Garden

1976

Calender of Events

FEB. 15 Bicentennial Box Social
Nucleus Theatre

FEB. 21 *Signers of the Declaration of Independence*
Ventura Luncheon Optomist Club

FEB. 21-22 Bicentennial Chorus
Ventura High School Auditorium

FEB. 23 Anza Trek Parade
Barbecue at Ventura Fair Grounds

APRIL 4 *Hometown Heritage*
Buenaventura Art Association

MAY 2 *Colonial Fair*
Temple Beth Torah

MAY 13-16 *Creativity in America*
Inventors Bicentennial, Expo III

MAY 15 Bicentennial Senior Day
Fashion Show, displays and demonstrations

MAY 16 Choir Guild Bicentennial Program
Ventura County Choral Conductor's Guild

MAY 21 Armed Forces Bicentennial Caravan
Buenaventura Center

MAY 24 Ventura's Early History
Soroptomist Club Bicentennial Program

BIRTHDAY PARTY

JULY 3 Children's Pushem-pullem Parade
Old Fashion Picnic, and Dancing

JULY 4 Colonial Church Services
Marina Boat Parade, and Fireworks

JULY 4-5 Main Street Fair
Historic Tours and Re-enactments

SEPT. 21 1976 Bicentennial Commemoration, Masonic Dinner

OCT. 5 *Drum and Fife to the Good Life*
Ventura County Fair and Parade

NOV. 7 *Freedom on Trial*
Bicentennial Pageant

Variety Store.

J. A. KUHLMAN

Has just returned from San Francisco with a large assortment of

Holiday Goods,

SUCH AS

Musical Instruments,
Children's Carriages,
Doll Wagons,
Games,
Dolls,

TOYS,

and other similar goods without limit.

He has also added to his stock a full assortment of Gentlemen's

FURNISHING GOODS,

Ladies' and Childrens' Hose,

AND

Berlin Zephyr Wool.

Also **FINE WINES AND LIQUORS** for family use.

GROCERIES

of the best assortment.

CANDIES AND FRUITS,
GARDEN SEEDS,
TOBACCO,
NOTIONS,
STATIONERY, and
SCHOOL BOOKS,

always on hand, all of which he offers to the public as cheap as any house in San Buenaventura. 34tf

SADDLES A SPECIALTY.

Paul Sutcliffe,

(Successor to H. N. Riggen)

SADDLE & HARNESS MAKER.

I WISH TO CALL THE PARTICULAR attention of all parties desiring to purchase to my large and complete stock of

HEAVY & LIGHT HARNESS

which cannot be excelled for strength and durability. I also have on hand a large and fine stock of

Mens' Saddles
Side-Saddles,
Saddle-Trees.

AT SAN FRANCISCO PRICES.

Halters, Hobbles, Bridles, Buggy Cushions, Synches, Whips, Shawls, Blanket and Baggage Straps made to order.

Trunks repaired, covered and renovated.

Repairing Promptly and Carefully Done.

All orders attended to in person and with dispatch.

Prices to Suit the Times.

Give me a call and examine my stock before sending off for articles in my line.

☞ Be sure and call on me before going elsewhere to get your

CARRIAGE TRIMMING

done. I will guarantee satisfaction in work and prices.

RIGGEN & WAGNER,

APOTHECARIES.

NOTICE.

ALL PERSONS INDEBTED to L. CERF & CO. should call and settle their accounts within thirty days from date, to avoid costs.

San Buenaventura, August 12.

iii18-4w L. CERF & CO.

Sutcliffe's is the model establishment of John A. Kuhlman. Mr. Kuhlman came here from Santa Barbara several years ago, and is

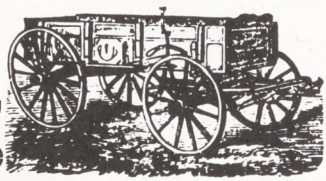
John A. Kuhlman

seldom seen away from his place of business. He deals in almost everything, keeping a fall stock of nuts, fruits, candles, tobacco, groceries, clothing and all those things which housekeepers are compelled to buy. His store during the holidays is full of toys; and hence Kuhlman's is always a popular resort for the little folks. A stranger when reaching the next place would have said in surprise: "What! have you as large a hardware store as this in southern California in a town of this size?" When assured that his eyes do not deceive him, he can but admire the pluck and energy which have pushed to completion so handsome and well-finished a building. The building belongs to E. A. Edwards, and is occupied by **Edwards & Grimes** who have combined their stocks and now present to the public a fine assortment of hardware, cutlery, etc. and also agricultural implements of all kinds. Mr. Edwards is our oldest hardware merchant, is our county treasurer, was formerly agent for the P. M. S. S. Co.[10] and still represents Wells, Fargo & Co.'s express com-

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL

HARDWARE STORE.

DEALERS IN

STOVES,  TABLE &

Tinware Pocket

CUTLERY, LAMPS,

Builders' Hardware and Mechanics' Tools,

NAILS OF ALL SIZES AND KINDS,

HORSE-SHOES, IRON & STEEL,

COAL AND HARDWOOD,

Brooms, Wooden & Willow-Ware

PAINTS, BRUSHES, **Pumps, Pipe & Gas-Fixtures,** SHOVELS, SPADES,

Hoes, Ropes and Chains, Wagon-Springs and Axles, Ammunition, Glass of all Sizes, Farm and Spring Wagons, and a full line of

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS,

Which we offer at reducee prices for cash. Tin and job-work at short notice.

EDWARDS & GRIMES.

pany, has hosts of warm personal friends won by his fairness and courtesy. His partner, Brice Grimes, brings to the firm rare business qualifications and industry. He is thoroughly posted in machinery of all kinds, and is a courteous gentleman to deal with. The glass front at **Edson's**, put up in city style, is the most showy of any in southern California, and probably for the size cost more money. The glass and fitting cost Mr. Edson more than many business houses have cost. Within may at all times be found Mr. Edson, his wife or Mr. Eagle, his accomplished assistant. The stock of jewelry, clocks,

C. J. EDSON,

PRACTICAL

WATCH-MAKER AND JEWELER,

Two doors west of Postoffice,

San Buenaventura

All work in this line

Will Receive Prompt Attention.

ENGRAVING Neatly Done.

Also Agent for the

ONLY RELIABLE SEWING MACHINE,

The Light-Running

"DOMESTIC,"

WARRANTED TO DO MORE work with less trouble to the operator than any other machine in the market, or **NO SALE.**

CALL AND SEE THEM.

Machines of all kinds repaired and extras, needles, silk, cotton, etc., for sale, together with a full and complete assortment of

DOMESTIC PAPER PATTERNS,

for LADIES' and CHILDRENS' clothing, with full direction by which any lady can do her own cutting and fitting. iii18tf

Notice.

ALL COUNTY WARRANTS are now payable at the County Treasurer's office.

E. A. EDWARDS,
Treasurer.

1t

BOOKS STATIONERY
—AND—
NOTIONS
AT THE POST OFFICE,

Constantly on hand, a complete assortment of

School Books, *Pocket Cutlery*, *Miscellaneous Books*, *Jewelry*, *Perfumery*, *News Papers*, *Magazines*, *Cigars*, *Tobaccos, and*

A choice selection of Fancy and Staple Notions.

AGENCY for all the Leading News Papers, Magazines and Publishing Houses in the United States. Any Book, Paper or Magazine furnished at Publishers rates. No money demanded from responsible parties, until the Book, paper or Magazine is furnished. 6tf

UNDERTAKING.

GRANT & BICKFORD

KEEP,

AT THEIR ROOMS ON EAST Main street, San Buenaventura, a large and fine assortment of

IMPORTED ROSEWOOD

COFFINS

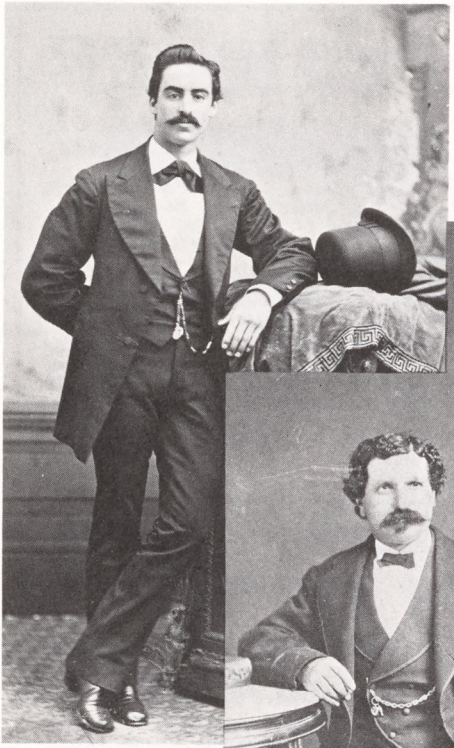
OF ALL SIZES,

Finely finished, highly polished, glass faced, and the

Only Stock of Ready-Made COFFINS

In Ventura county. Also, Trimmings, Linings and Shrouds.

watches and silverware is most complete and well arranged in elegant showcases. Opposite Edson's is the drug store of **Riggen & Wagner.** Both the proprietors are young men, and practical, experienced and careful druggists. Sylvester Riggen has grown up to



Luis
Arnaz

Juanita
and
Isaac F.
Roth

manhood among us, and is universally known as a young man of unexceptionable morals and good habits. He is methodical and punctual and steady as a clock, and speaks Spanish with fluency. His partner, John Wagner, received his education in one of the largest cities in the northwest. He is a close student and a fluent German scholar, and is undoubtedly one of the best prescription druggist in southern California. No one applying to this store for a prescription need fear that mistakes will be made. Their charges are as reasonable as those of any druggist on the coast. They keep pure

I. F. ROTH. L. ARNAZ.

ROTH & ARNAZ,

Would respectfully announce to the citizens of **Ventura County** that they have opened their

NEW STORE, Cor. Main and Oak Streets,

With a large and well selected new stock of

General Merchandise,

Consisting of

Groceries, Provisions, Dry Goods,

Clothing, Boots, Shoes, Hats and Caps,

Hardware, Crockery and Queenware,

Willow-ware, Tinware, Tobaccos, Cigars,

Foreign and Domestic Wines and Liquors,

and a variety of **Fancy Articles,** including everythin rom

A HAIR PIN to a SHEET ANCHOR,

All of which we are now offering at RUINOUSLY LOW PRICES.

WE are prepared to offer y u great inducemonts both as to prices and quality of goods. ☞ All kinds of produce taken in exchange for goods. The highest market price pai for produce. Remember the place, **East Main Street, cor. of Oak.** 49tf.

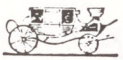
drugs and medicines, perfumeries and toilet articles of all kinds, and a full line of paints, oils, varnishes, etc. Mistakes are dangerous: don't mistake the place, two doors west of postaffice. If you want a glass of Philadelphia ale, or the latest fruits of the season, or a cigar, or tobacco or anything kept in a variety store, drop in on **E. Franz** next door to the postoffice. Our next call wait upon **Col. Goodwin,** our postmaster, who bears the reputation of being the most exact and punctual postmaster in the state. He carries a good line of stationery, books and fancy goods. Across Oak Street is R. M. Brown's big block, the lower story of which is occupied by **Roth & Arnaz,** both of whom are experienced merchants. Mr. Roth has been long and favorably known to the public, has done business both here and at Hueneme, is a careful and reliable man, and always looks closely after the interests of his house and guards zeal-

AT THE "C. O. D." STORE YOU

WILL FIND THE LARGEST

ASSORTMENT OF

Dexter Livery Stable.



EAST MAIN STREET,

Daly & Heasley,

PROPRIETORS.

WE HAVE FURNISHED OUR NEW stable with a new and handsome lot of

Buggies and Carriages,

And Safe Horses,

For single or double rigs or the Saddle. Horses Boarded by the day, week or month at reasonable rates. 5-20-tf

VENTURA MARKET.

Kaiser & Conner

Have just opened a

New Butcher Shop

first door east of, SIGNAL office, where they will be pleased to wait on all customers who are in search of first rate

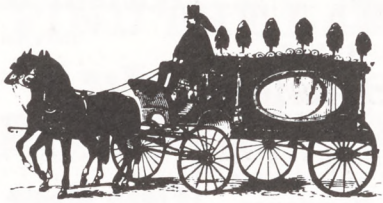
Fresh Meats of all Kinds.

They will always be supplied with the best meat the market affords.

Your patronage is solicited.
27-3m KAISER & CONNER.

ously its reputation for fair dealing. Luis Arnaz, the junior member of the firm, is quick, energetic and determined to please if possible. Andy Snodgrass, one of our most popular salesmen, and Manuel Arnaz are the clerks. Their arrangement of goods in the show windows is tasteful and artistic. The goods are in the line of general merchandise, and of the best assortment. On the north side of Main opposite Roth & Arnaz is the mammoth livery stable of T. H. Daly, occupied and fitted up in first-class style by **Messrs. Daly & Heasely.** These gentlemen propose to keep safe turnouts,[11] and to let them at reasonable rates. It is a comfortable place for transient stock. It is but a few steps to **Brown's C.O.D.** store, steps which it will pay any man to take in search of a bargain or of a driving business man who is not afraid to take hold of any enterprise in which there is money. He has built and helped to build the two largest stores in southern California. He came here with but small means, his capital being his indomitable pluck and enterprise and keen foresight. R. M. Brown has always insisted that upon this site must be built one of the largest cities on the southern coast, and has backed his judgment with his last bottom dollar, doing much to inspire confidence in others. He has built in addition to his big block three other buildings this year. His is a cash dry goods and clothing store, and makes quick returns and small profits. Floyd Shaw and John Riggen, both steady young men, are Brown's right and left bowers; and both quick as a flash to wait on a customer. Just beyond Brown's and next door to the *Signal* office is the new meat market just established by **Kaiser & Connor.** They have re-

J. RICHARDSON,



UNDERTAKER,

CORNER OF MAIN AND CALIFORNIA STREETS.

A fine HEARSE always in attendance at funerals when desired.

Also DEALER IN FURNITURE.

Furniture of all grades always on hand and made to order as low as the lowest.

35-tf

furnished, repaired and enlarged the old shop; and are prepared to furnish beef, mutton or pork in the best style. They are new men, and thoroughly posted in their business. Directly opposite the *Signal* office **Messrs. Brooks & Co.** are refitting the stable formerly occupied by Hyde & Daly. Further up the street, on the south side, is the hardware store of **C. D. Todd.** Mr. Todd is an old hardwareman from Adrian, Michigan, does a cash business and stocks up with only the very best goods. He is a fixture in our town, and by his close attention to business has secured a good trade and many warm friends. A few doors beyond, next to H. Marks, is the new harness shop just established by **Perry & Rider.** They have started in right: are hard workers, steady men; and may always be found at their post. They will do good work and make their harness and saddles from the best of stock. Across California Street is the immense furniture store of **J. Richardson,** the first man to use water power in

Housekeeper's Emporium!

HOUSEKEEPERS, TAKE NOTICE!

—THAT—

C. D. Todd's

Is the place to find everything you want for use in the kitchen from a TEA SPOON to a

Mammoth Cooking Stove!

Three Sizes of the CELEBRATED

DIAMOND ROCK

COOKING STOVE

Kept constantly on hand. More of these stoves have been sold on this coast by far than any other. It gives the best of satisfaction, and is WARRANTED in every particular. They have good draft, they bake splendidly, and the broiling arrangement is far ahead of any other stove in this market. I manufacture a first-class article of

TIN WARE!

To which I wish to call your attention. I keep a fine variety of

SHELF HARDWARE!

And can quote as low prices as the lowest. Mechanics will find it to their advantage to price my **TOOLS** before buying.

An examination of my goods and prices will convince you where you can buy the most goods for the least money.

WATER PIPES AND FITTINGS

A SPECIALITY.

C. D. TODD.

FAMILY GROCERY

J. A. COREY,

East Main Street San Buenaventura.

A General Assortment of

GROCERIES, PROVISIONS

AND

MERCHANDISE

Selected with special refference to

FAMILY USE.

FARMERS, DAIRYMEN AND Families in town will find it to their interest to call and examine my goods and prices before making their purchases elsewhere. All kinds of

COUNTRY PRODUCE

Taken in exchange for goods.

C. E. Murray & Co

PAINTERS,

East Main St, San Buenaventura,

ARE ALWAYS PREPARED TO DO work in their line in the highest style of the art.

SIGN-PAINTING & GRAINING

☞A Specialty.☜

FOR EVERY VARIETY OF first-class JOB PRINTING bring your work to the SIGNAL OFFICE.

the county. Mr. R. has made the furniture business the business of his life, and is thoroughly posted in it. He has the latest style of furniture: chairs, sofas, parlor or bedroom sets, marble top tables, bureaus, etc. He will surely accommodate you with what you want. He has also a complete stock of undertaker's goods. The new and well-finished shop recently built by **K. P. Grant** is one of the best in the state. He has all the modern improvements to lighten and facilitate his work. Mr. Grant is a hard worker and an enterprising citizen. He has helped to build up our town, and has a ready voice for every laudable improvement. Further on is **Murray & Co.'s** paint shop where may at all times be found signs painted in the highest

Great Rush

OF THE

PEOPLE.

WAR

On High Prices.

The Trouble Just Begun.

Brown's C. O. D. Store

WILL MAKE THE

HARD TIMES EASY.

PROF. MAX ENDERLINE will, upon the 1st day of December next, in the old school building on West Main street, open a private school, and will teach all the branches usually taught in the first class colleges.

FASHION RESTAURANT!

HAVING LEASED THE CENTRALLY located building on

East Main Street,

Formerly occupied by Harrington, the undersigned is prepared to accommodate regular and transient boarders with

FIRST-CLASS DAY BOARD.

With many years' experience as a Restaurautier, I feel confident that I can answer the requirements of the public.

THE TABLES

Of my establishment will be supplied with

The Best the Market Affords,

And everything will be served in style.

TERMS MODERATE!

21tf **W. QUAST.**

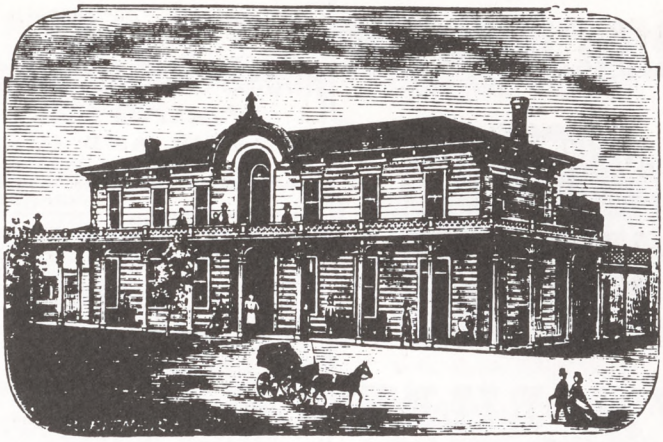
GUN-SMITHING!

H. S. POPE,

PRACTICAL GUN & LOCK-smith. All kinds of fire-arms cut, cleaned and repaired, and warranted to give the most perfect satisfaction. Particular attention devoted to lock-smithing and all kinds of work on intricate and fine machinery Call and leave your orders at my shop on E. Main street.

H. S. POPE.

style of the art. Indeed the Messrs. Murray are each more than mere house and sign painters, they are artists. From Murray's we go over to the new restaurant kept by **W. Quast.** When we say Mr. Quast is an old steamship steward, we say that he understands catering to the most fastidious appetite. A few doors west is **H. S. Pope's** new furniture store, and gun store and ammunition depot.



SAN BUENAVENTURA, CAL.

VENTURA HOUSE.

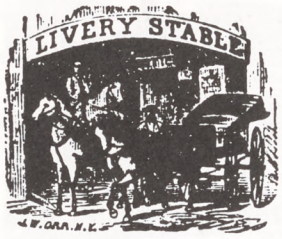
THE PROPRIETRESS OF THIS House, having added thereto a number of fine lodging apartments, is now prepared to furnish the best accommodations to be had in the place.

THE CULINARY DEPARTMENT, being under her immediate supervision, is always of the first order.

N. B.—A few commodious rooms with fire-places to be had by those who apply soon. J. J. HOBSON,
iii34tf Proprietress.

His stock of furniture is kept replenished constantly. He has in the short time he has been in business built up a good trade. He also manufactures furniture of all kinds. Mr. Pope is a practical gunsmith and keeps breech and muzzle-loading shotguns, rifles and revolvers of the best patterns. Next door to Pope is **J. A. Corey,** one of our oldest grocery men. In his new store he has a well-selected, well-arranged stock of groceries. Mr. Corey's reputation for perfect honesty and fair dealing, has made his house a favorite place of dealing with many. From Corey's we went south, passing the paint shop of the **Ley Brothers.** These gentlemen have a neat shop, are both thorough artists and pleasant men to do business with. On the corner of Santa Clara and California Streets is one of the handsomest hotels in this part of the state, erected by **W. D. Hobson.** It is neat in all its appointments, the tables are well supplied, and everything about it has a pleasant, inviting air. Next in our way are the **Black-Hawk Stables** on Santa Clara Street, kept by that first-class horseman, Wm. S. Riley. He has good facilities for feeding and taking care of horses, and always has horses and turnouts for sale

BLACKHAWK



WM. RILEY,

PROPRIETOR.

THE BEST TURNOUTS

IN THE CITY.

Horses Boarded by the Day, Week or Month.

BALED HAY FOR SALE CHEAP.

38-tf.

T. A. LEY,

HOUSE, SIGN & CARRIAGE PAINTER.

GRAINER AND PAPER-hanger. Orders left at the Mission Hotel will be promptly attended to.. iiin17-3m

VENTURA LUMBER YARD.

SAXBY, WALTON & PREBLE,

AT THE VENTURA LUMBER YARD, corner of Santa Clara and Palm streets,

SAN BUENAVENTURA,

Keep constantly on hand a large and well selected stock of

RUSTIC, SIDING
FENCING, PICKETS,
MOULDINGS, FENC-POSTS,
REDWOOD SHINGLES,
REDWOOD SHAKES,
SASH, BLINDS,
WINDOWS,
DOORS,

CEDAR SHINGLES,

LIME, HAIR,
PLASTER, CEMENT,
BUILDING HARDWARE,
DRESSED BATTONS,
3-INCH AND 6-INCH LUMBER FOR DOOR & WINDOW FRAMES,

and everything kept in a

FIRST-CLASS LUMBER YARD.

The best Pine and Redwood

Rough Lumber

in the market.

and hire. On up Santa Clara and down Chestnut we proceed, and soon come in sight of the immense piles of lumber at the yard of **Daly & Rodgers,** where is kept all grades of lumber: heavy timbers, studding, fencing, finishing lumber, pickets, lath, etc.; and there, at every hour in the day may be found James Daly or Owen Rodgers, both first-class, reliable business men (men who understand that the country is to grow and the town is to be a great city, and who are preparing for the new order of things with rapidity). Passing on down that street, upon which are some of the handsomest residences

JAMES DALY. OWEN RODGERS

Daly & Rodgers,

DEALERS IN

LUMBER AND ALL KINDS OF BUILDING Material

(Cor. Cal. & Front sts.)

San Buenaventura,

Keep always on hand

SURFACED LUMBER, SUGAR PINE, RUSTIC SIDING and all other kinds of BUILDING and FENCING LUMBER.

ALSO,

MOULDINGS, LATH,

FENCE POSTS,

REDWOOD SHINGLES

REDWOOD SHAKES,

SUGAR PINE SAHKES,

DRESSED SIDING,

ROUGH PICKETS

FANCY PICKETS.

Doors, Windows, Blinds

SASH,

SUGAR PINE SHINGLES,

LIME, HAIR, CEMENT, PLASTER,

Paints, Oils, Etc.

DRESSED BATTONS,

3-inch, 4-inch, 5-inch, and 6-inch, for

Door & Window Frames.

Hardware

Of every description for building purposes and everything kept in

FIRST-CLASS STYLE.

Pine and Redwood ROUGH LUMBER of a SUPERIOR QUALITY to any other in this market.

Sanford Campbell

CARRIAGE PAINTER,

East Main Street,

San Buenaventura.

I HAVE OPENED AND SUPPLIED with good stock a

CARRIAGE PAINT SHOP,

Where I will execute every description of

CARRIAGE and WAGON PAINTING

In the highest style of the art.

Satisfaction Guaranteed.

Call and see Me.

22-tf SANFORD CAMPBELL.

CALIFORNIA BAKERY!

Between Main and Santa Clara Sts.

German,

Fresh, and

Graham Bread,

Cakes, Biscuits, Rolls and Pies,

Of every kind. Also

All Kinds of Pastry

Done for Partys, Picnics, Weddings, Etc.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE BAKERY I have also established a first-class

RESTAURANT

Where the table will be found supplied with the very best the market affords. Meals at all hours.

22-4t **CARL SHERRER, Prop.**

in the city, and up Palm, we soon arrive at Saxby, Walton & Preble's lumber yard. This firm is composed of three of the staunchest men of the place. I. T. Saxby has always been a stirring, energetic man to whom the sound of driving hammers and saw is the choicest music. He likes to see towns grow and to be where people are pushing things. W. J. Walton is an old San Francisco lumber man who can grade lumber as fast as he can talk. C. S. Preble, though new in the business, brings to the firm an enviable reputation for fairness.

NOTICE.

THE INTEREST OF DANIEL Einstein in the firm of Einstein & Bernheim ceases from this date. The business will hereafter be carried on by M. Einstein and A. Bernheim, under the same name and style.

D. EINSTEIN,
M. EINSTEIN,
A. BERNHEIM.

iii16-4t

ASSIGNEES' OR TRUSTEES' NOTICE of appointment.—In the District Court of the United States, for the District of California. In the matter of L. Cerf, of Ventura county, bankrupt. In bankruptcy. To whom it may concern: The undersigned, M. H. Myers, of the city and county of San Francisco, hereby gives notice of his appointment as assignee of the estate of L. Cerf, of San Buenaventura, in the county of Ventura, in said district, and who was, to wit, on the 16th day of February, A. D. 1876, adjudged bankrupt, upon the petition of his creditors, by the District court of the United States, for the District of California.

Dated at San Francisco the 15th day of March, A. D. 1876. M. H. MYERS,
Assignee, 312 California st, San Francisco.
51-3t

The firm carries an immense stock, and all are kept busy. Coming up Oak Street we encounter the **California Restaurant** of Carl Sherrer, where we get a 'square' meal and felt encouraged to retrace our steps to the shop of **Sanford Campbell,** next to Grant's shop, where the handsomely painted wagons and buggies attest the skill of Mr. Campbell.

R. M. BROWN'S ENTERPRISE

From The Ventura *Signal*[12]

It would be an injustice to the town should we overlook the most substantial improvement in Ventura. We refer to Brown's Block, on the corner of Main and Oak Streets, the property having a frontage of 100 feet on Main and 200 feet on Oak Street, both business streets. Its location is the most central one in town. We will start in by visiting the different buildings in the block owned by the irrepressible C. O. D. Brown. On the northeast corner of the block is a frame building fronting 36 feet on Main and running back 75 feet. One side of this building is occupied by the Monumental Fire Company as a hall and fire house. The building adjoining is occupied by the owner himself, in which he is running his C. O. D. store. Next to this is a space of about 33 feet, which is to be built up in a few months and with the building adjoining used as a hotel. The crowning feature of the block is the corner building, occupied as follows: The lower part, fronting Main Street 34 feet by a depth of 100 feet on Oak Street, is occupied by Messrs. Roth & Arnaz as a general merchandise store. Adjoining the store of Roth & Arnaz

Monumental Fire Company

are the law offices of Messrs. Hines & Brooks and the office of Ferdinand Vassault. An elegant stairway, sufficiently wide to allow three persons to ascend abreast, leads to the upper part of this building. On this floor we find the chambers of our city government and the office of the town clerk and assessor. Next is the office and apartments of Mr. J. J. Mahoney, architect and builder, who is at present engaged in superintending the fine building being erected by Mr. J. B. Ysoardy. Next is the study of Rev. Harper and the rooms of Mr. Rider, Mr. Kaiser, Mr. James Ham, Mr. Henry Stiles; and then comes the apartments of R. M. Brown, without doubt the most elegantly fitted up rooms in Ventura, much too fine for a bachelor to occuppy. Adjoining these apartments are the rooms of Messrs. Johnson, John Riggen, S. B. Riggen and J. P. Riggen; then comes the office of Dr. Smith; and adjoining it the office of Dr. Guiberson. The building presents a splendid appearance; and Mr. Brown, the owner, spares neither time nor money in making every possible improvement on or around this magnificent building. The modest appearance of the building from the outside would hardly lead one to suspect it contained such elegant rooms and offices; but as Mr. Brown's object was solidity he preferred to sacrifice beauty.

Ayers Hotel and Ysoardy's Block

A wooden cornice would have shown off to better advantage, but the building would not have been as secure from fire. The rooms are all provided with fine marble washstands; and for safety a fire hydrant is in the center of the main hall. On the sidewalks on Oak and Main Streets are also to be found hydrants for use in case of fire. The building is thus securely guarded from accidents by fire. Every suite of rooms is provided with fireplaces with fine Carrara marble mantlepieces. All the halls and stairs are covered with cocoa carpeting, deadening the noise from walking. A large reflector lamp at the corner of the building and one at the Oak Street entrance show that Brown is determined to do all he can to improve the property, and make his offices the best and most convenient ones in Ventura. Just in the rear of the large brick is another range of buildings: the first of which is the private residence of Mr. Sanford Campbell; next is the dressmaking establishment of Mrs. Sherman; and adjoining is the California Restaurant and Bakery, all fronting on Oak Street. It is hardly necessary to mention that this property is the most valuable one in Ventura; and although every office, store or tenement is rented for a good deal less than it is worth, the property still gives an income of over $300 per month.

Thos. Arundell,
CONTRACTOR AND BUILDER,
WILL take contracts to erect brick or frame buildings anywhere in San Buenaventura or vicinity. May be found at his residence near town, or orders may be addressed through the postoffice.

S. P. CUIBERSON,
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON,
County Physician.
OFFICE—Room 22, Up Stairs, Brown's Block.

YSOARDY'S NEW BLOCK

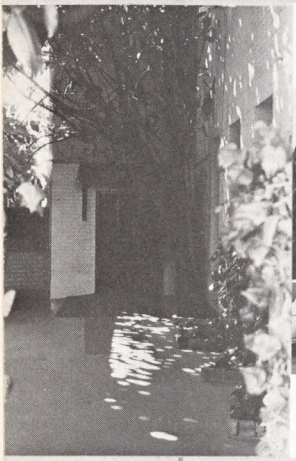
From The Ventura *Signal*[13]

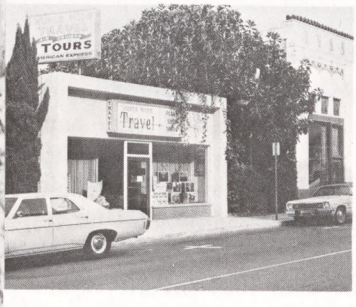
Last spring Mr. Bautiste Ysoardy of this place concluded to build a block on his lot on Main Street, south side, adjoining the Ayers House. The work commenced on the 1st day of July under the superintendence of John J. Mahoney, the architect, who prepared the plans for the building. It is two stories high. Mr. Thos. Arundell did the brick work and did his work well. The carpenter work under the immediate supervision of Mr. Murphy of Santa Barbara was done by the day. Since the commencement of the building from eight to ten men have been employed every day. The plumbing and tin roofing was done by Mr. Latiallade and the plastering by Mr. Workman. The front is of iron and very handsome. The cornice of wood, substantial and showy. The building when complete will cost over $15,000, and will be the best building of its size south of San Francisco. The lower story is divided by a spacious hall running the entire length of the building. On one side of the hall is a large room for a restaurant with four private rooms in the rear. In the rear of the main building is another building 70 feet square, in which will be erected an oven and a furnace for baking and cooking to supply the restaurant. The upper floor is divided into 22 rooms all of them large, airy and the most of them commanding fine views of the town, the ocean and the mountains. For building so handsome a building and one so much needed, Mr. Ysoardy deserves a great credit. We hope his neighbors will follow suit next year.

FOOTNOTES

1. October 16, 1875.
2. Ventura Avenue.
3. Site of the Sanchez townhouse.
4. Spear's Hall on the upper story.
5. Quadrangle of the mission.
6. There were two men named Henry Clay, one dying in 1879; both are buried in Ventura cemetery.
7. Drink to . . .
8. Gossip?
9. Clowns.
10. Pacific Mail Steamship Co.
11. Equipage.
12. October 23, 1875.
13. October 30, 1875.

Bahns Jewelers
Baldwin Piano & Organ Center
Trudy Clark's Boutique
The Copy Machine
Crackpot
Earthshine
William Gomez
Heather House Interiors
Postal Instant Press
Prime Minister





1 88

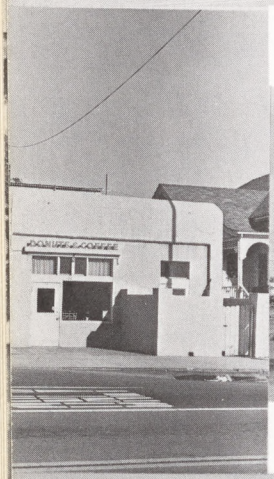
The Pump Room
Raggedy Ann's
San Souci
Grace Scott Shop
Star-Free Press
Studs 'N Stuff
Sutton's Carpet Warehouse
Travis Music Co.
Ventura Theatre
World Wide Travel

The Big Green House
Fix-it Shop
J P J California
Kenpo Institute
of Chinese Kung-Fu

6

Meagher Auto Parts
The Playboy Inn
Shakey's Pizza Parlor
United Engraving Co.
Ventura Auto Electric Co.

B J's
Bowser Boutique
California Trading Post
Martha Albee Davison
The Flea Market
Ron Garner's Chevron Service
Goodyear Tire Center
House of Turkey

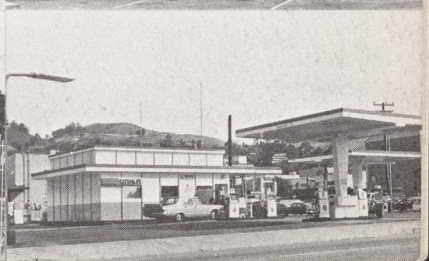


1 89

Leaded Glass Ltd.
Maria's Draperies
My Place
Robin Hood's World
Salad & Sandwich Saloon
Tam-O-Shanter
Liquor Store
Tom's Cafe

Economy Polyfoam & Fabric Center
Fiesta Drive-in Restaurant
Firestone Stores
George's Drive In
Gosselin Upholstering
Hong Kong Inn
Meta Liquors
Meta Motel
Munding Union Station
Rainbow Room

6



1976

San Buenaventura Bicentennial Commissio

CONEJO VALLEY

Bicentennial-Centennial

1776 - 1876 - 1976

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Vol. XXI, No. 3 Spring 1976

CONEJO VALLEY
Bicentennial-Centennial
1975-1976
City of Thousand Oaks

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The *Quarterly* is published from the Society's headquarters at the Pioneer Museum. The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. Grant W. Heil is Editor and the Staff includes Mrs. Naydean L. Baker, Bill Ballas, Roy Eisele, Duane L. Garber, Charles H. Heil, Ruth L. Heil, David W. Hill, Charles D. MacGregor, Charles F. Outland, Mrs. Johanna D. Overby, Thomas A. Roe and Richard D. Willett.

Three thousand copies printed for the Conejo Valley Bicentennial-Centennial Commission and the Ventura County Historical Society by Clark's Printing Co., Ventura, California. Additional copies are available at $3.50 each.

The Ventura County Historical Society *Quarterly*

Vol. XXI, No. 3 Spring 1976

Grant W. Heil, Editor

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HISTORY OF RANCHO EL CONEJO

By Patricia Allen

Notice

The author wishes to thank the members of pioneer families, who generously provided her with information and photographs.

The photography was collated by David W. Hill. Charles MacGregor redrew the brands and the house plan, and Bill Ballas remade the road map. David Allen sketched the cover.

HISTORY OF RANCHO EL CONEJO

By Patricia Allen

Topping the crest of the Conejo Grade from the Camarillo side has ever been a pleasant surprise to travelers who look forward to the continually changing panorama of the Conejo Valley. It might be enhanced by a misty fog hanging gracefully over the hills ringing the valley, or the view might be one of a sparkling blue sky and virgin clouds floating over the entire area. In summertime the arid brown hills, unattractive to some, present a nonetheless appealing contrast to the pleasing green shades seen in seasons of ample rainfall.

The Conejo Grade once boasted a landmark at the top of its crest, which marked the roadway for Spanish explorers, priests and colonists who historically followed the trails traveled by the local Indians. These natives could usually be prevailed upon to guide the newcomers over their well-known paths. The landmark, known as La Mojonera, was shown on the early maps of the 1800's. The name is a Spanish word, translated literally as a pile of rocks which it well might have been. It is more probable that it carried the second meaning of being simply a landmark, visible for many miles as a guide to travelers seeking the pass over La Cuesta Grande which the mountain range at the western edge of Rancho Conejo was called. An early twentieth century map carries the notation that La Mojonera was destroyed when the state highway was built.

The Conejo Valley as we know it today contains approximately 48,670 acres of land. The boundaries closely coincide with those outlined in 1803 when Rancho El Conejo became the second of two Spanish land grants made in what was to be the County of Ventura. It is presumed to have been named for the numerous black-tailed jackrabbits who inhabited the area along with a variety of other small animals including the coyote, gray fox, badger, striped skunk, brush rabbit, cottontail rabbit, California ground squirrel, pocket gopher, raccoon, kangaroo rat, desert wood rat and meadow mouse. These small animals were eaten by the Chumash Indians who lived in the area. They were used to augment their diet of acorns, seeds, nuts, berries, roots, tubers and grasses. All of these foods grew abundantly in the oak-studded valley.

A list of identified remains compiled by archeologists who excavated the site of the Canterbury Cave rancheria in Portrero Valley suggests that there were also bobcats, mountain lions and herds of

GUADALASCA
CALIFORNIA
SAN FERNANDO
Pacoima
Sierra Madre
Sandberg
Mt. Lukens
Pacoima Peak
Pacoima Canyon
Big Tujunga Canyon
Mt. Gleason
Little Tujunga Canyon
Tujunga
Sunland
Verdugo Mts.
Glendale
Burbank
Griffith Park
Hollywood
Los Angeles
Pasadena
Arroyo Seco
Raymond Hill
Monterey Park
Alhambra
Rubio Canyon
Eaton Canyon
Altadena
Mt. Wilson
Sierra Madre
Arcadia
Santa Anita Canyon
Monrovia
Duarte
Azusa
Irwindale
Baldwin Park
El Monte
Rosemead
San Gabriel
San Gabriel Mts.
Mt. San Antonio
Mt. Baldy
Cucamonga Peak
Cucamonga Canyon
Ontario
Upland
Claremont
Pomona
Chino
Puente Hills
Whittier
Whittier Narrows
Rio Hondo
San Gabriel River
Los Nietos
Norwalk
Santa Fe Springs
Montebello
Commerce
Vernon
Huntington Park
Bell
Maywood
Cudahy
South Gate
Lynwood
Compton
Watts
Inglewood
Culver City
Beverly Hills
Santa Monica Mts.
Mulholland Hwy
Topanga Canyon
Malibu Canyon
Malibu Creek
Malibu Lake
Las Virgenes
Las Virgenes Creek
Triunfo Canyon
Triunfo Creek
Lindero Canyon
Russell Valley
Boundary Line
Conejo
Conejo Grade
Conejo Creek
Arroyo Conejo
Arroyo Santa Rosa
Santa Rosa Valley
Simi Valley
Simi Hills
Simi
Santa Susana Mts.
Santa Susana Pass
Chatsworth
Chatsworth Peak
Chatsworth Reservoir
Northridge
Porter Ranch
Oat Mt.
Sierra Pelona
Soledad Canyon
Soledad
Acton
Agua Dulce
Agua Dulce Canyon
Newhall
Saugus
Santa Clara River
Placerita Canyon
Sand Canyon
Sulphur Springs
Tujunga Canyon
Big Tujunga Creek
Little Tujunga Canyon
Little Tujunga Creek
Pacoima Canyon
Pacoima Creek
Pacoima Reservoir
Pacoima Dam
Foothill Blvd.
Sierra Madre Blvd.
Colorado St.
Huntington Dr.
Mission Rd.
Valley Blvd.
Garvey Ave.
Ramona Blvd.
Rosemead Blvd.
Whittier Blvd.
Slauson Ave.
Florence Ave.
Firestone Blvd.
Imperial Hwy.
Alondra Blvd.
Artesia Blvd.
Rosecrans Ave.
Manchester Ave.
Century Blvd.
Sepulveda Blvd.
Wilshire Blvd.
Santa Monica Blvd.
Melrose Ave.
Sunset Blvd.
Hollywood Blvd.
Ventura Blvd.
Riverside Dr.
Olive View
Foothill Blvd.
Roscoe Blvd.
Devonshire St.
Chatsworth St.
Simi Valley Rd.
Las Virgenes Rd.
Mulholland Hwy.
Pacific Coast Hwy.
Malibu Canyon Rd.
Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Ventura Freeway
Hollywood Freeway
Golden State Freeway
Santa Ana Freeway
Long Beach Freeway
Pomona Freeway
San Bernardino Freeway
Foothill Freeway
Antelope Valley Freeway
Simi Valley Freeway
Santa Monica Freeway
Harbor Freeway
Glendale Freeway
Pasadena Freeway
Arroyo Seco Parkway
Riverside Freeway
Orange Freeway
Los Angeles River
Rio Hondo
San Gabriel River
Whittier Narrows
Whittier Narrows Dam
Puddingstone Reservoir
Puddingstone Dam
Big Dalton Wash
Walnut Creek
Chino Creek
Cucamonga Creek
Mission Creek
Arroyo Seco
Eaton Wash
Santa Anita Wash
Rubio Wash
Sawpit Wash
Monrovia Canyon
Duarte Canyon
Azusa Canyon
Irwindale Canyon
Baldwin Park Canyon
El Monte Canyon
Rosemead Canyon
San Gabriel Canyon
Mt. San Antonio Canyon
Mt. Baldy Canyon
Cucamonga Canyon
Ontario Canyon
Upland Canyon
Claremont Canyon
Pomona Canyon
Chino Canyon
Puente Hills Canyon
Whittier Canyon
Los Nietos Canyon
Norwalk Canyon
Santa Fe Springs Canyon
Montebello Canyon
Commerce Canyon
Vernon Canyon
Huntington Park Canyon
Bell Canyon
Maywood Canyon
Cudahy Canyon
South Gate Canyon
Lynwood Canyon
Compton Canyon
Watts Canyon
Inglewood Canyon
Culver City Canyon
Beverly Hills Canyon
Santa Monica Canyon
Mulholland Canyon
Topanga Canyon
Malibu Canyon
Malibu Creek
Malibu Lake
Las Virgenes Canyon
Las Virgenes Creek
Triunfo Canyon
Triunfo Creek
Lindero Canyon
Russell Valley
Boundary Line
Conejo Canyon
Conejo Creek
Arroyo Conejo
Arroyo Santa Rosa
Santa Rosa Valley
Simi Valley
Simi Hills
Simi Canyon
Santa Susana Mts.
Santa Susana Pass
Chatsworth Canyon
Chatsworth Peak
Chatsworth Reservoir
Northridge Canyon
Porter Ranch Canyon
Oat Mt. Canyon
Sierra Pelona Canyon
Soledad Canyon
Soledad Creek
Acton Canyon
Agua Dulce Canyon
Agua Dulce Creek
Newhall Canyon
Saugus Canyon
Santa Clara River Canyon
Placerita Canyon
Sand Canyon
Sulphur Springs Canyon
Tujunga Canyon
Big Tujunga Creek
Little Tujunga Canyon
Little Tujunga Creek
Pacoima Canyon
Pacoima Creek
Pacoima Reservoir
Pacoima Dam

mule deer abounding in the area. They too were eaten by the local Indians, but not in such large numbers as the smaller animals were. Birds and their eggs were also relished food items. Researchers also identified the remains of three varieties of seals, porpoise, sea otter, domestic dog, northern sea elephants and whale, which were food items as well as all kinds of fish, clams, abalones and mussels.

The home grounds of the Chumash Indians included the area from Los Angeles to as far north as San Luis Obispo. Pedro Font, who accompanied Juan Bautista de Anza overland from Tubac and came through the Chumash lands in 1776, wrote that they were "well formed and of good body, although not very corpulent." The women were clothed in knee length skirts formed by two buckskin aprons tied to the waist, one in front and one in back. If it were cold, they might wear an animal skin cloak fastened at the corners. Their head and one arm were put through the opening. If they were carrying a heavy load, a basketry cap was added to offset the weight of the heavy basket suspended from a band around the forehead. The men were frequently without any clothing, but might wear a cape of deer hide, bird feathers or woven strips of fur when the weather was cold. The children usually did not wear any clothes. Both sexes pierced their ears and noses, and wore earrings and necklaces made of sea shells and stone. Nose plugs were fashioned from hollow reeds and were sometimes filled with tobacco which was smoked in a wooden pipe. Indian villages are identified as rancherias; and their inhabitants, both men and women, practised extensive body painting. Distinctive designs were used to identify members of the same rancheria.

The first known white men to come into contact with the Indians of the rancherias of the Conejo Valley were those of the exploring party of Gaspar de Portolá who came through the area in 1770. Portolá was the commanding officer of the Spanish army contingent which came overland from Velicata in Baja California in 1769. Junipero Serra, the dedicated priest, was in this group. He and his faithful associates were prepared to begin the work of the Franciscan order. The first phase of the Spanish plan was the founding of two missions and presidios. Three shiploads of men and supplies had been sent to rendevous with the overland expedition at a site known for many years as San Diego. The first mission and presidio were to be established there; but building plans were put aside temporarily because of the deaths and severe illness of those who had arrived on the sailing vessels. They became ill during the long

voyage from Baja California because their drinking water was contaminated. The water casks, which were filled with fresh water before their departure, had leaked. As a result the sailing vessel had been obliged to make anchor and take on a new supply. The water taken on was not potable; and those aboard ship, many of whom were already suffering the effects of scurvy, became ill. Nearly half of the crews and passengers on two of the ships died. The third supply ship met with an unknown disaster and never arrived in San Diego.

It was impossible to proceed with the extensive plans formulated without ample supplies. There were not enough crewmen alive or well enough to sail back to their home port to bring more supplies. As a consequence it became necessary to send a company of soldiers back overland to enable the expedition to continue their stay in San Diego, and complete their plans of colonization in the Monterey area. Fray Serra set to work immediately assisting in the care of the sick and dying, and attempting to convert the many heathen Indians who abounded in the area. Eventually enough soldiers and sailors recovered sufficiently to sail back to take on additional supplies.

Captain Portolá continued arrangements so that the overland journey to seek out the round bay known as Monterey could be completed. The port they were seeking had been observed for over two centuries by the seamen on the Manila Galleons as they made their way home from the Philippine Islands. This sea voyage was made annually by these unwieldy and often overloaded vessels which traded in the Orient for fine silks and other luxuries and necessities not avalable in America. The sea captains had learned to take advantage of the Japanese Current which they picked up and followed to the Cape of Mendocino and then down the coast of California and back to Acapulco. It was a long and arduous trip and they were often in need of fresh supplies and water before reaching home. It was hoped that a settlement could be established in the area of Monterey so that the vessels might stop there. The Spanish crown also feared the Russian and English, who were constantly exploring the coast of the North American continent, would colonize the area. It was hoped that Spanish colonies in Alta California would discourage settlements from these two countries.

The well-trained soldiers who accompanied Portolá on this exploration included many men whose names would become well known in the early history of California. They included Pedro Fages, Fernando

de Rivera, José Francisco Ortega, Pedro Amador, Juan Bautista Alvarado, José Raimundo Carrillo, José Antonio Yorba, Pablo de Cota, José Ignacio Olivera, José Maria Soberanes and many others. In addition to these soldiers from the Royal Presidio at Loreto, the expedition was accompanied by muleteers and many Christian Indians who had come with the group from Baja California. Francisco Gomez and Juan Crespi attended their spiritual needs, and Miguel Constanso was the official map maker. Fray Crespi was the official diarist; and it was he who named the locations along their pathway, many of which have remained in use to the present time. The first horses and cattle ever seen in California were brought by the Portolá expedition of 1769. There does not seem to be much comment made about the reaction of the Indians except in the area of San Francisco where they were astounded to see the cattle. The Indians adapted to the life on a rancho very well, and they later became excellent vaqueros.

This dedicated group, consisting of sixty men and their mounts plus pack animals, made their slow and laborious way up the coast of California. They turned inland and traveled through the San Fernando Valley and the Santa Clara River Valley to arrive back at the coast. It took them from July to October to reach the location of Monterey. The bay, however, was unrecognizable to them from the land side and they pushed on to the north. It was on this trip that the Bay of San Francisco was first viewed by Spaniards. Many of the men were ill and foodstuffs had been reduced to a few bags of flour for tortillas when the discouraged group began the long trek back to San Diego. Although they had found the Bay of San Francisco, they had failed in their attempt to find Monterey. On the return trip they camped at Carmel River which had been described to them as emptying into Monterey Bay, but it was unrecognizable in its dried up form. The men trudged back down the coast of California tired, sick and discouraged. It became necessary to kill and eat one of their pack mules each day in order to survive; but as they progressed down the coast they were given fish and sea food by the Indians, and there was no further suffering for food.

On January 12, 1770 they made their camp in the area of present day Camarillo according to Crespi, "near a village of sixty heathen, more or less, and very poor. In this place there is water, firewood and pasture." On the following morning they set out with a guide from the village who led them into Portrero Valley "through a very

practical pass through which they crossed over a great part of the range." Afterwards, reads the diary, "We ascended a hill from which an arroyo precipitates itself. Its source is in a very large spring covered with watercress. After mounting the hill we found ourselves in a very slightly valley, covered with pasturage and live oaks. This valley ends opposite another rugged ridge, at the foot of which there is a small village whose heathen treated us to roasted cactus. Then we climbed the hill and from its top saw another very beautiful plain in which we found another village of heathen, close to which we halted. There was plenty of water near at hand and firewood and pasture in abundance. The march covered two leagues and a half [about ten miles] and I called this spot El Triunfo del Dulcisimo Nombre de Jesus."

The following day they were guided by "two old heathen" and attempted to make their way through the Santa Monica Mountains to the sea. They discovered that the heavily laden pack animals could not make their way through the thick brush and were turned back. They spent that night at another rancheria as the villagers indicated it was too late to travel to the next watering place before dark. Crespi describes his location, pinpointed by historian Herbert E. Bolton as the Russell Valley near Westlake, as "a plain of considerable extent and much beauty, forested in all parts by live oaks and oaks, with much pasture and water."

On January 15, 1770 they were guided through the Calabasas Pass and into Santa Catarina Valley where they had camped in August on their way to Monterey. This was probably at Encino in the San Fernando Valley. They then made their way back to San Diego where they waited with Serra and the others left behind until the supply ship San Antonio arrived on March 19. Plans were immediately made to retrace their return route through the Conejo and back to Monterey. This time the round bay was seen from a different vantage point, and it was realized that they had passed by it without recognition on their first trip. Fray Serra met them there on May 31, coming by sea on the supply ship. Religious services were held on June 3, 1770; and a large wooden cross was erected to mark the location of the mission in Monterey.

Thus was the path of El Camino Real traced through the Conejo Valley in 1770. It was only the beginning of many groups who would find their way through the beautiful plains and hills that are still landmarks of the valley and follow the faint trail left by the Portolá

expedition. A lasting memorial to that long ago trip is the name of Triunfo which is still retained in many valley locations. It was probably first used by the Spanish grantees of the Conejo Valley who called the area now known as Westlake, the Rancho Triunfo. The name was perpetuated by the Russell family who bought 6,000 acres in Westlake in 1880. It is still proudly used by a descendant of the Russells who owns the Triunfo Appaloosa Ranch in the area.

Russell Brothers

The next known large expedition through the Conejo Valley was that commanded by Captain Juan Bautista de Anza, the first to find a route across the great unknown Colorado desert. He was commander of a frontier presidio at Tubac in Pimeria Alta,[1] following the tradition of his father and his grandfather who were both well known Indian fighters. He had long cherished a dream of finding a way across the desert to Alta California which would enable Spain to send supplies overland to the struggling colonies instead of depending on ships which had to fight their way up the coast in the face of strong winds which often blew them off their course. There were times when it took three months for these supply vessels to sail from San Blas to the port of Monterey. Occasionally the ship was required to return to its home port without ever reaching its destination.

In 1774 Captain Juan Bautista de Anza successfully made a winter crossing of the Colorado River and Desert and the rugged mountains of southern California, and arrived at San Gabriel Mission. He and his men were given assistance by the Yuma Indians who guided them and directed them to the places where water was stored naturally in basins in the rocks. Without their help the expedition would undoubtedly have failed. Anza and his troops followed the route pioneered by Portolá through the Conejo Valley, and continued on to San Francisco Bay to seek out a suitable location to be used for a presidio and mission which were needed in the area. He left Tubac on January 9 of 1774 and completed his exploration and returned there on May 26 of the same year. The discovery of a passageway through the desert was so vital to the existence of the Spanish colonies in Alta California that Anza was authorized to plan for a

second trip immediately. He was ordered to recruit soldiers and settlers to populate a settlement at the new site of San Francisco. Enrollment of these volunteers was begun as he left Mexico City to make his way home from the first expedition.

By September of 1775 he had collected the necessary personnel and supplies to embark a second time. Detailed plans for an expedition such as this have been compared to the preparations needed for a modern day trip into space. This overland exodus would take 240 persons almost 2,000 miles by horseback. More than half of the group were women and children; and it is amazing that more travelers arrived in California than had begun the trek. One mother died in childbirth along the way but the baby survived, as did several others born on the trip. Most families contained many children, and two sets of parents each brought nine youngsters along with them. There were not enough mounts for each child so fathers carried children in their arms, or the mother cradled her infant in the shawl which was worn by all the women. Some children rode before or behind the saddle on the horse ridden by a parent; and still others rode in panniers, the large baskets slung from the backs of horses or mules. In this manner several children could be transported on one mount.

There were ten veteran soldiers from the presidio which Anza commanded at Tubac, and eight veteran soldiers from Sonora who escorted the group. Twenty-two volunteer soldiers were recruited and brought their family members. There were many muleteers to assist with the animals and four servants for the religious. Lieutenant José Joaquin Moraga served as lieutenant-commander of the extensive caravan, and he was assisted by Sergeant Juan Pablo Grijalva. Their command included a total of three hundred and forty horses, one hundred and sixty-five pack mules and three hundred and two cattle. It resembled a small army with its large military tents loaded onto mules, along with the food, baggage and supplies for the soldiers and colonists.

Before the expedition left Tubac to begin its long journey, Fray Pedro Font gathered all together to celebrate a mass. He compared them to the Children of Israel wandering in the desert seeking the Promised Land. The colonists were simple people of hardy stock and much accustomed to hardships. These traits would assist many times during the difficult journey ahead. They were however used to the mild weather of Sinaloa and were often dismayed at the early and severe snows they encountered in the mountains which had to

be traversed. They greatly enjoyed their first view of the beautiful Pacific Ocean as they traveled along the coast of California.

It is believed that several of them were spared death before crossing the Colorado River into California because of the generosity of the Yuma Indians. Many of the colonists were severely ill when they reached the land of the Yumas, often a fierce and warlike people who lived on the delta lands of the river. They cultivated and irrigated small plots of land and raised muskmelons, squash, corn and watermelons which they stored by burying them in the wet sands near the river. The sick colonists were given watermelons which were dug out for them, and this act is credited with their recovery. The Indians under the direction of Chief Palma were of great assistance in helping the unwieldy group cross the rive.r Anza, who had been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, was greatly respected by the Indians with whom he was well acquainted from his years of soldiering on the frontier. He was very careful to distribute gifts to these tribes who were frequently fighting among themselves, and treated them with great respect.

The ascent of the mountains of the Anza-Borrego Desert was extremely difficult because of the early and heavy snows. Many of the cattle froze to death in a storm; and Lieutenant Moraga, who was assisting the soldiers in charge of the animals, lost his hearing in the severe cold. Despite the many hardships they arrived at Mission San Gabriel on January 4, 1776. It was a cause for much happiness and rejoicing and the mission bells pealed out a special welcome to the weary travelers. Their joy was shortlived when it was found that Captain Fernando de Rivera y Moncado had arrived from the north and was on his way to San Diego Mission where an Indian uprising had taken place, and Fray Luis Jayme killed. Anza and the majority of his soldiers left immediately to assist him in quelling the uprising. The delay prevented them from leaving San Gabriel until six weeks later.

They took up their journey again on February 21 and the first day their route took them through the pass at Glendale and across the valley named by Crespi as Santa Catarina, now San Fernando. From that point their route followed closely that of Gaspar de Portolá and the first expedition of Anza himself. Camp was made near the site of Westlake on Anza's first trip through the Conejo Valley. On this second trip they camped overnight at the Agua Escondida (or hidden water) which was alongside Las Virgenes Creek west of

Calabasas. The following day which was Friday, February 23 they passed through the Conejo Valley which Font describes in his diary:

> The road in parts is level, and in parts one goes up and down the ridges until one reaches the long grade, from which one sees the sea and the first islands of the Channel of Santa Barbara. Descending this ridge, [at the Conejo Grade] one finishes crossing the range which extends from the Sierra Madre and ends at the sea. Then one enters a plain extending more than five leagues to the [Santa Clara] river and beyond. The range has many oaks and live oaks and other trees, and likewise some watering places, like those of El Triunfo and Los Conejos,[2] and in it we saw four small villages. The camp site is somewhat lacking in firewood and the river is very miry and bad when it rises, but is now low. Near it there was a fairly large village whose Indians had fish, because it is near the sea; and on the river there were many geese, ducks, cranes and other fowl. We saw in the plain a very large drove of antelopes which, as soon as they saw us, fled like the wind, looking like a cloud skimming along the earth.
>
> In the course of today we saw several Indians all unarmed and naked. The women were very cautious and hardly a one left their huts, because the soldiers of Monterey, since they were not married, had offended them with various excesses . . . This shyness I observed in all the villages of the Channel.
>
> At the foot of the Cuesta Grande, near a small village, there is a spring of water like a well; and at twelve paces from it there is a good sized spring of asphalt which rises right there, and I learned afterward that near the mission of San Gabriel there is another one.

That day as they descended the long, steep Cuesta Grande most of the women, frightened at the severe grade, dismounted and made their way down the rugged mountain on foot. Font complained bitterly about the California fleas which were plentiful everywhere, but especially on the Conjeo Mountain. Here "they were so bad that wherever we halted everything was alive with them, and very hungry ones. No country is without its plague and that one has the plague of fleas."

Pulex irritans *Pulex irritans*

The Anza expedition marched fifteen leagues or nearly forty miles from their camp at Agua Escondida to the Santa Clara River this second day out of San Gabriel. The valiant group of settlers and soldiers arrived in Monterey on the 10th day of March to the delight of travelers and residents alike. Muskets were fired and bells rung to greet the newcomers, and a special mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated.

The Presidio of San Francisco was officially founded on September 17, 1776 and it was soon followed by the building of the Mission of Saint Francis of Assisi.

There is little doubt that many groups of soldiers and friars passed through the Conejo from time to time as they traveled between the missions with messages and to exchange goods and supplies which might be in long supply in one area and badly needed in another. However, there is no known time or date when such trips actually took place. Following the opening of the route through the desert it became possible to send supply trains and livestock to Alta California.

In 1779 a new regulation for governing the California colonies was enacted. Like most regulations in the New World it was slow in becoming activated so did not go into effect until 1781. It was part of the general system for regulating frontier provinces owned by Spain. Until that time California was ruled under a temporary system set up for that purpose. The new regulation provided, among other things, for the occupation of the Santa Barbara Channel region where there were numerous rancherias. Plans were initiated to set out missions at Santa Barbara, La Purisima and San Buenaventura. A presidio was planned for Santa Barbara and a pueblo would be started at a site on the Los Angeles River.

Captain Rivera y Moncado had accompanied the Portolá expedition from Baja California to San Diego in 1769, and was later appointed military commander at Monterey. In 1781 he was serving as Lieutenant-Governor of Baja California. Because he had experience in Alta California, he was appointed to command the expedition of soldiers and settlers for the new settlements. He was entrusted with recruiting the personnel for the Santa Barbara Presidio and the pueblo to be called Queen of the Angels. Most of those recruited were residents of the northern provinces of New Spain, being from Sonora and Sinaloa. The requirements demanded that all colonists and soldiers be married, robust and healthy. They were to be persons of steady background, who led regular lives and who agreed to set a good example to the Indian natives. They were encouraged to induce unmarried female relatives to accompany them since wives were desired for the many unmarried soldiers already on duty in California.

The rendevous place for all personnel and supplies was the town of Alamos in Sonora, and the caravan assembled there was the largest

one ever to make its way to California. Many of the colonists recruited for the Los Angeles Pueblo were from Alamos and the town has since been referred to as the Mother of Los Angeles. The settlers, under the command of Lieutenant José Zuniga and Subaltern Ramon Lasso de la Vega, separated from the main body of the caravan and made their way to the coast where they embarked for the voyage across the Gulf of California to Loreto on the Baja California peninsula. From there they traveled overland up the peninsula to San Diego and arrived without incident in San Gabriel. They were reunited with the rest of the recruits and their families at that place.

The remainder of the assembled overland caravan was under the command of Captain Riviera y Moncado and his Subaltern Cayetano Limon. They left Alamos in April of 1871 to begin their long overland trek to California by way of the Colorado River and through the lands of the Yuma Indians. Thirty-five soldier recruits and their families made up the party. They were escorted by seasoned soldiers from the various presidios of Sonora, who would return when the expedition was safely across the Colorado River. Lieutenant Diego Gonzales and Subaltern José Dario Arguello were the officers assigned to assist Rivera and Limon. The progress of the travelers through the northern provinces was kept at a deliberate pace to prevent unnecessary hardship and fatigue to the families and to keep the vast cavalcade of livestock in the best possible condition.

The Yuma Indians had been friendly and helpful to the Anza expedition, and Rivera did not anticipate any difficulty in passing through their lands a second time. Francisco Garces had accompanied Anza and remained with the Indians to work among them and learn more of their culture and languages. He had previously spent much time with these Indians and was greatly respected by them. Many were converted to Christianity by Fray Garces who later learned to his dismay that they equated Christianity mostly with the receiving of gifts.

The Yumas watched Anza's caravan of 1776 traverse their lands en route to establish missions and settlements in California. They observed enviously the pack animals laden with supplies for the colonies and expressed a desire that they might have mission settlements on their Colorado River lands. As a result, Chief Palma accompanied Anza on his return trip to Mexico City and laid his request before the authorities there. They acquiesed and presented him with many gifts in appreciation of his assistance to Anza.

Two small missions were subsequently established in the area of the Yuma Indians. Spanish colonization had traditionally been a three pronged development. A mission was built and staffed to care for the spiritual needs, colonists of a pueblo raised garden products and livestock to feed the settlers, and the presidio was built and provided with soldiers to protect them all. This plan was not followed when the two missions were established on the Colorado, despite advice of Lieutenant Colonel Anza and Fray Graces to the contrary. In the interest of economy it was deemed necessary to send priests to begin the mission and a few soldiers with their families to maintain order. This proved to be a serious mistake. The supplies provided were not sufficient for their needs and it became necessary to send to San Gabriel for additional assistance. Some garden products were purchased from the Indians who overcharged for their produce.

Many problems arose between the soldiers and the Indians. Any Indian who did not follow the rules as laid down by the Spaniards was liable to be flogged or put into stocks as an example to the others. To make matters worse, the indolent soldiers refused to respect the rights of the Indians and allowed their livestock to trample the carefully irrigated garden plots. The Indians became increasingly rebellious and insolent; and it was into this explosive atmosphere that Captain Rivera and his large caravan entered in June of 1781. They were driving a herd of nearly a thousand head of cattle to California to be used as foundation stock at the new missions and pueblo. As the animals crossed the desert lands they ate and virtually destroyed the sparce mesquite and plant growth. This final imposition, coupled with the fact that Rivera did not distribute the lavish gifts which they had been accustomed to receiving, outraged the Indians.

Captain Rivera planned to rest the cattle at the river for several weeks before proceeding to California. Governor Felipe de Neve sent a detachment of soldiers from the California presidios to assist in the final portion of the arduous journey, and they remained to assist in guarding the cattle. Subaltern Limon was put in charge of the soldier recruits and their families and they pushed on to their destination at San Gabriel arriving safely late in July. On July 17 when the family group was well on its way out of the area, the storm burst and the aroused Indians descended on the two small missions. They savagely attacked and killed all of the soldiers and the four priests stationed there. All of the buildings were sacked; and what the In-

dians did not carry off, they burned. The bodies of the men were left strewn where they lay on the desert; but unaccountably, the bodies of the priests were buried. The women and children were not molested, but were taken captive and carried off to other out-of-the-way villages. On the following day the Indians attacked Rivera at the encampment on the eastern shore of the Colorado River. Although he and his small detachment of soldiers fought valiantly, they were all killed by Indian arrows or clubs.

Word of the uprising did not arrive in California until nearly a month had passed. Immediately a contingent of soldiers was dispatched to bury the dead and to find and punish the Indians, but they had faded into the inner desert and could not be found. In December the women and children were successfully ransomed; but nothing much was ever done to the perpetrators of the crimes. However, the disastrous massacre on the Colorado closed the overland route needed so badly to supply the colonies of Alta California. Numbered among the survivors of the massacre, who had escaped by virtue of their early departure from the area, were two soldiers who were destined to play an important role in the unfolding history of the Conejo Valley. The two men were José Ignacio Rodriguez and José Polanco, who later became the grantees of a Spanish land grant for their services in the army of King Carlos III.

Little information can be found concerning José Polanco who, according to regulations set down, must have been accompanied by his wife; but no information has been found concerning such a person. José Ignacio Rodriguez was a third generation member of a family who emigrated from Spain. His birthplace was Metape, Sonora where he was born in 1760. He married Juana Paula Parra, a native of Alamos, early in 1780; and their first son was born in the same town later that year. This small infant with the imposing name of Francisco Xavier Rodriguez was carried in the arms of his young parents as they made the 1200 mile trip to Santa Barbara on horseback. What a heart-rending decision it must have been for the sixteen year old Juana to leave her family in Sonora. She would accompany her soldier husband on a difficult journey to a remote and

unknown land from which she would never be able to return. One could well imagine the doubts that assailed the two of them when they learned how narrowly they had escaped death at the hands of the Indians in the terrible massacre on the desert route they had recently left. No doubt they attended a special mass said at the mission for the repose of the souls who had lost their lives, and joined in a thanksgiving prayer for those who lives were spared.

The Indian uprising caused great consternation in upper California and it was deemed unwise to divert any troops for new settlements. As a consequence the colonists remained in San Gabriel for eight months waiting for their new assignment. The Pueblo of La Reina de los Angeles was founded in September of 1871; and it is possible that Corporal Rodriguez was part of the escort who accompanied them to the new location on the Rio de Poriuncula.[3]

In March of 1782, following the cessation of the seasonal rains, Governor Neve undertook the journey from Monterey to San Gabriel to personally accompany the soldier-colonists to the Santa Barbara Channel region. Padre Serra, father-president of the California missions, also arrived from the Mission San Carlos to travel with the group. Many special precautions were taken to insure the safety of the colonists in their new homes in view of the comparatively dense population of Indians in the channel country.

Junipero Serra, having first heard from the Portolá expedition of the many rancherias located in this area, had fervently desired for many years to establish missions there. It was a fertile field in which the Franciscans could strive for the conversion of the souls of the amiable and intelligent Chumash Indians. The Chumash were noted for their beautiful baskets and unusual stone bowls. The men were excellent fishers and adept boatmen in their red painted canoes which they paddled swiftly throughout the waters of the channel and even to the islands, themselves. The canoes were ingeniously built from hand carved planks in which holes were drilled so that they might be laced together with deerhide thongs. They were made watertight by heating the asphaltum found in nearby natural springs and using it to caulk the seams. The tar-like substance had many other uses. Chunks of the solid materials were dropped into the Chumash baskets, after which heated rocks were added and rolled around inside to melt the asphault. In this manner the basket was sealed so that it might be used for carrying and storing water. The canoes were used for fishing in the kelp beds off the coast and a boat load of fish might re-

quire a complement of ten men to carry it from the surf to the rancheria. All considered, this spot was an ideal place to locate a mission.

It can easily be assumed that the caravan which left San Gabriel en route to the channel area followed the path through the Conejo Valley which was first traversed by the Portolá expedition, and passed by the rancherias named El Triunfo and Los Conejos. José Polanco and Ignacio and Juana Rodriguez may have had their first glimpse of their future lands on that memorable March day. It is not difficult to imagine their attraction to the beautiful valley with its gigantic oak groves set along the meandering creeks and arroyos. In a year of normal rainfall the valley would be entracing in its velvet green carpet. It would be too early for the spectacular wild flowers to be in bloom; but the sparkling blue sky contrasted to the luxurious growth on the low hills and the rugged rocky peaks that ring the valley would have presented as breathtaking a view almost two centuries ago as it does today.

The first objective of the company was the rancheria named Assumpta by the members of the Portolá expedition. They noted that it bore all of the necessary ingredients for a successful Spanish colony. It was located on the banks of a large river which drained the nearby timbered mountains and into the sea. There was ample water, and the natives fished and gathered all manner of sea food from the ocean. A site near the beach within close view of the Assumpta rancheria was chosen for the establishment. The new residents could see the neat conical huts made of branches and covered with tule mats, in which their new Indian neighbors dwelled. A shelter of boughs was built to protect the altar; and on March 31, 1782 a cross was raised and the mission, long dreamed about, became a reality.

Fray Serra preached the sermon and formally dedicated the new mission to the 'Seraphic Doctor', San Buenaventura, who had been a Franciscan cardinal. His true name was Giovanni di Fidanza; but he had been nicknamed by Saint Francis of Assisi who greeted him one day with the Italian expression of "O buona ventura". Francis envisioned that the priest would obtain future greatness, which he did. The name translated to Spanish was San Buenaventura and it stayed with him thereafter. A large attendance of Spaniards and Indians was present to take part in the ceremonies. The Indians expressed their pleasure at the events which had transpired and cheerfully aided in the work of building shelters for the inhabitants. Fray Pedro

Benito Cambon took charge of the new mission until the arrival of the permanent priest, Vincente Santa Maria, the following month.

Governor Neve, who had been called back to San Gabriel the first day, arrived after a couple of weeks and gave his official sanction to the new establishment. The main company then prepared to move further up the channel and the commander, José Francisco Ortega, appointed a sergeant and fourteen soldiers to remain on guard at the mission. They next halted at a site that had been named Santa Barbara many years previously. It was on the shore of a small lagoon and was well suited for a presidio. A Chumash rancheria, which was named Yanonalit after its chief, was situated nearby. The Indians were extremely friendly and willing to exchange gifts with the newcomers. They were helpful in felling trees to be used in building the palisade which was set up to enclose the shelters for the colonists. Their pay was in the form of food and clothing. Chief Yanonalit had authority over thirteen rancherias and his friendship and cooperation proved to be a great assistance to the personnel of the new presidio. A formal ceremony took place on April 21st of 1782 with Fray Serra celebrating mass, and chanting an *alabado*.[4] Then observing that another mission could not yet be begun at this place, he regretfully set his steps for the return to the mother mission of San Carlos.

José Francisco Ortega, the pathfinder of the Portolá expedition, took command as founding organizer of the Royal Presidio of Santa Barbara. Thirty-six leather jacket soldiers and officers made up his company and it included men whose descendants became prominent in California. The subalterns were Pablo Antonio Cota and José Dario Arguello; Sergeants José Raimundo Carrillo, José Maria Ortega and Ignacio Olivera; and Corporals Pedro Amador and Ignacio Rodriguez. José Polanco may have been among the leather jacket soldiers at San Buenaventura or Santa Barbara because he is listed by the California historian, Hubert Howe Bancroft, as a soldier attached to the Santa Barbara compound in 1800.

By this date the Rancho El Conejo had already been requested for a grant, and it is possible that Polanco was farming on it. He is among the men listed in 1801 who have "100 and 200 *fanegas*"[5] of grain available to the governor to sell at San Blas. This was an unusual situation for there was seldom a surplus of anything grown in the early days of the colonies. It is also quite possible that the sale of the grain was regretted at a later date for records show that the

unseasonably cold winter of 1803 brought much rain and some snow, and the seed rotted in the ground and did not sprout. Governor José Joaquin de Arrillaga acceeded to the request of José Polanco and José Ignacio Rodriguez and in 1803 Rancho El Conejo was granted to the two of them in an undivided interest.

At this point in time Polanco seems to have lost interest in the rancho for we find him the next year listed as a resident of the Pueblo of Los Angeles. Perhaps after the unfortunate farming year of 1803 he was not desirous of becoming a rancher. At any rate he seems to have abandoned his claim to the Conejo, and he was still listed among the residents of the pueblo in 1819. The translation lists him as an "invalid" from the Spanish word *invalido;* but Maynard Geiger at the Santa Barbara Mission Archives says that it means a retired soldier. The latter is more believable; if Polanco were an invalid, he could not very well be working at the pueblo and Bancroft lists him as one of the residents of the pueblo who is ranching at a place known as Los Quintos near Los Angeles. In 1840 he is the grantee of the Rancho San José de Buenos Aires in the vicinity of what is now Westwood. Maximo Alanis is listed as the other grantee to the rancho, and the entire rancho was regranted to him alone in 1843. A widow named Maria Leon Polanco died in Santa Barbara in 1847 and she is described as being "very old". No family is listed as surviving her. The average life span of 125 years ago was so much different than it is today that it is impossible to determine how old an extremely old woman might be; but one is inclined to wonder if she might have been the widow of José Polanco.

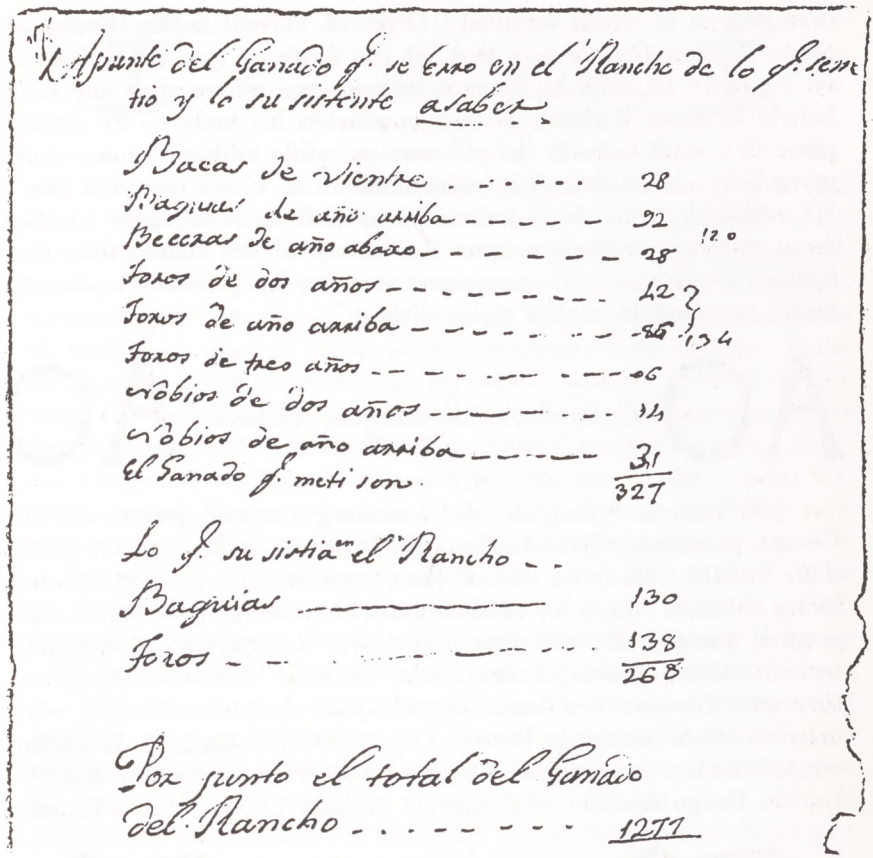
Jose Ygnacio Rodriguez

Ignacio and Juana Rodriguez remained at Santa Barbara for the remainder of their lives. It is not known if they inhabited the Rancho El Conejo which was granted to them in 1803; but an adobe was built and the land stocked with cattle, horses and mules. A copy of the original portfolio,[6] the file which concerned all data pertinent to a given rancho, has been examined; and it explains that a copy of the original grant is missing. This leaves a gap in information from 1803 until 1822. The rancho has sometimes been called by the name of Altagracia, but it is not known if the name was included in the

original request for the grant. It was not uncommon for a rancho to contain several names in the title. This was equally true when the Spanish named their children, and most of them were baptised with several names. It may be significant that the son born to Ignacio and Juana Rodriguez in 1804, the year following the grant, was named José de Altagracia Rodriguez.

In 1822 Captain José Antonio Julian de la Guerra y Noriega, the well known commandant of the Santa Barbara Presidio, petitioned Governor Pablo Vicente de Solá for an undivided half of Rancho El Conejo. He claimed that José Polanco, a veteran, abandoned his claim to the Conejo soon after it was granted and went to live in the Pueblo of Los Angeles. The regulations forbade the grantee to sell or alienate any part of his claim, and José de la Guerra reasons that the claim should have reverted back to the government for regrant. He then asked that the portion known as El Triunfo (now Westlake and North Ranch) which was granted to Polanco be granted to him. He was in danger of losing the little stock he had for the support of his numerous family and needed more land.[7] On October 10 Solá, in recognition of the many services of Captain de la Guerra, granted him one-half of Rancho El Conejo in the name of the Emperor of Mexico. Bancroft in his history of California asserts "that the part of the Conejo which had belonged to Polanco was afterward dignified by the name of Nuestra Senora de Altagracia." The Simi grant, which was patented to de la Guerra in 1865, was named San José de Gracia de Simi.

Prior to petitioning for Rancho El Conejo, José de la Guerra was checked in his attempts to obtain ranches at Piru and the Sespe because of the objections of the padres of San Fernando and San Buenaventura Missions. They maintained the land belonged to the missions, and was needed by them for supplying livestock. The Franciscans did not desire that ranchos be established. They freely expressed the opinion that their presence was detrimental to the success of the missions. The owners, they said, led idle lives and were a poor example to the Indians. The rancheros, they claimed, rarely attended mass but never missed a fandango. The Indians


Apunte del Ganado q. se topo en el Rancho de Lo q. pertenecio y lo se existente a saber

Bacas de vientre	28	
Bagias de año arriba	92	120
Becerras de año abajo	28	
Toros de dos años	42	134
Toros de año arriba	86	
Toros de tres años	06	
Novios de dos años	14	
Novios de año arriba	31	
El Ganado q. metieron	327	

Lo q. se existia en el Rancho

Bagias	130
Toros	138
	268

Por junto el total del Ganado del Rancho 1271

De la Guerra livestock inventory

found it difficult to understand why they should be punished for missing religious services when the Spaniards ignored them. Captain de la Guerra did not fall into this category, however, for his devotion to the Church was well known. For many years he acted as treasurer to the California missions.

Much has been written concerning this prominent and well educated gentleman of early California. Both he and his wife were descended from Royal Spanish families and their marriage required that special permission be obtained from the King of Spain. José Antonio Julian de la Guerra had married Maria Antonia Juliana Carrillo, only daughter of Captain José Raymundo Carrillo and Tomasa Ignacia Lugo, in 1804. They became the parents of nineteen chil-

dren, fifteen of whom survived. Owen H. O'Neill in his *History of Santa Barbara County* says that "at the death of José de la Guerra on February 18, 1858 his funeral cortege was greater than any ever beheld at Santa Barbara, as they conducted his body to its resting place in a vault beneath the old mission, while military honors were given him. More than 100 descendants of his blood mourned him." He added that "no single individual has left or is likely to leave a more enduring impression upon the history of this region than this Spanish gentleman. No man came so near, by peaceful legitimate means, to absolute control of his district."

José Ignacio Rodriguez, the remaining original grantee of the Conejo, presumably lived in Santa Barbara from 1782 until his death there in 1814. He left a widow, Juana aged 49, and probably twelve living children. In order of their birth they were: José Maria who married Josepha Romero first and Maria del Carmen Dominguez second; Maria Josefa Andrea who married Clemente Quintero first and Teodoro Arrellanes second; José de Jesus Teodoro who married Maria Bernarda Ruiz y Lugo; José del Carmen Saturnino whose wife is unknown; José Francisco Norberto who married Rafaela Castro; Felipe Antonio who married Rafaela Leyba; Maria Tomasa

who married Antonio Maria Ortega; Maria del Carmen Estaquia who married Jacinto Lorenzana; José Luis Gonzaga who married Maria Clemencia Arrellanes; José de Altagracia who married Maria Bernarda Rosas; Maria de Pilar who married Pablo Vanegas; and José Antonio whose wife, if any, is unknown. The three children known to have preceded Ignacio in death included: his first-born son, Francisco Xavier who may have died as an infant in Los Angeles as no record was found in the Santa Barbara Mission Archives concerning his marriage or death; Maria Gertrudis Celia who married José Maria Martin Ortega and died in 1804; and José Antonio Francisco Lazaro

who died in 1803. His widow, Concepcion, later married a José Maria Rodriguez and it is possible that he was her brother-in-law.

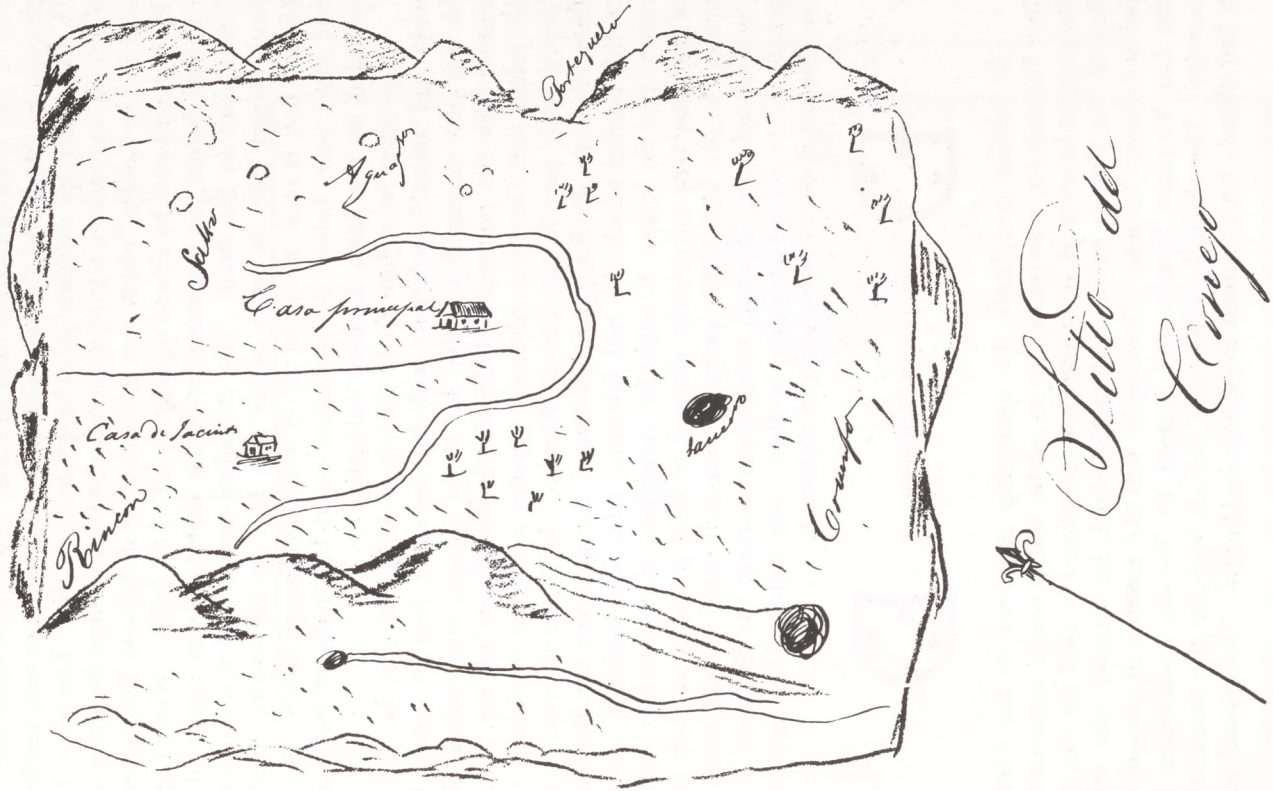
Prior to his death, as was the custom, Ignacio called in two witnesses and made a last will and testament in their presence. They were Sergeant Juan Ortega and a soldier, Juan Lugo, who heard him name his fourth son, José de Jesus, as first executor of his will and Felipe Antonio, his seventh son, second executor. Ignacio declared that he owed the padres at Missions Santa Barbara, San Buenaventura and San Fernando whatever amount they claimed at each mission. Mariano Olivera owed Ignacio two serapes; and the soldier, Tomas Espinosa, owed him two broken horses with a value of $5.00. His executor was asked to pay $3.00 "on his account of the present war, as directed by royal decree in relation thereto", and to clear all of his debts from proceeds of his property. If there was not enough property to discharge the debts, he requested that his son make up what was wanting. The document was signed August 15, 1814.

José de Jesus paid his father's debts, and supported his widowed mother and younger brothers and sisters for more than twelve years until her death in 1827; also he paid her debts, as he had done for his father. By this time the youngest son was 16 years old and presumably able to care for himself. All of the livestock belonging to the parents, had remained on the Conejo in the care of José de Jesus, and had increased in number. At the death of Juana Rodriguez it was equally divided among the brothers and sisters, with José de Jesus taking none for himself. He had sacrificed to care for his father's family members and put the needs of his own family second to theirs. He believed himself to be the rightful heir to Rancho El Conejo as the executor of the estates of Ignacio and Juana Rodriguez, his parents. He had been in undisputed possession of the rancho for thirteen years. Captain de la Guerra and José de Jesus jointly occupied the Conejo in harmony for many years.

In 1833 Maria del Carmen Lorenzana, a sister of José de Jesus who with her husband, Jacinto, and two children had been a part of the family supported by Jesus for many years, moved onto the ranch. They lived in an adobe on that portion of the Conejo known

as El Rincon. This corner was located in the lower western portion of the ranch south of the present day Highway 101. The northwestern corner was La Mojonera which was called "The Monument" by Maria del Carmen in her description of the place. The boundary line ran east to the "old house", an adobe, and then turned south toward the "Cañada de Alisos running toward the Lagoon" at Hueneme. The "Alisos" referred to Big Sycamore Canyon. The "old house" was Casa Principal, or the main house, located on the map which was included in his petition of 1822 by de la Guerra. It was shown as the home of Bernarda Ruiz Rodriguez, widow of José de Jesus, at a later date. It is not possible to pinpoint the location of the Casa Principal, but an interview with Bert Culbert of Somis in 1973 revealed his recollection of the remains of two adobes in the Conejo about 1899. Mr. Culbert freighted out of the Conejo Rancho with a team and wagon for O. A. Wadleigh who rented a large ranch approximating the location of the shopping center built on what later became the Janss Ranch. He recalled going to the remains of an old adobe with Mr. Wadleigh late one night; it was located in back of the Wadleigh home. The memory stayed with him because they carried a lantern to check the progress of a large, old sow who was farrowing.

Maria del Carmen and Jacinto Lorenzana began to build corrals on what José de Jesus considered the best lands of the rancho; and believing himself to be the owner, he requested that they cease. At that juncture, Maria del Carmen appealed to the governor to ask if she, as a daughter of the grantee, was not also entitled to a share of the rancho of her father. In addition, she complained, she did not know by what authority Captain de la Guerra was allowed to have his livestock on El Triunfo. There ensued a long drawn out series of petitions and replies in which the problem was examined. José de Jesus explained that he was under the impression that he was sole owner of the share of the Conejo which had been granted to his father because of his position as executor of the estate. A deposition from José de la Guerra stated that he did not feel it necessary to explain his occupancy of the Conejo area called El Triunfo to



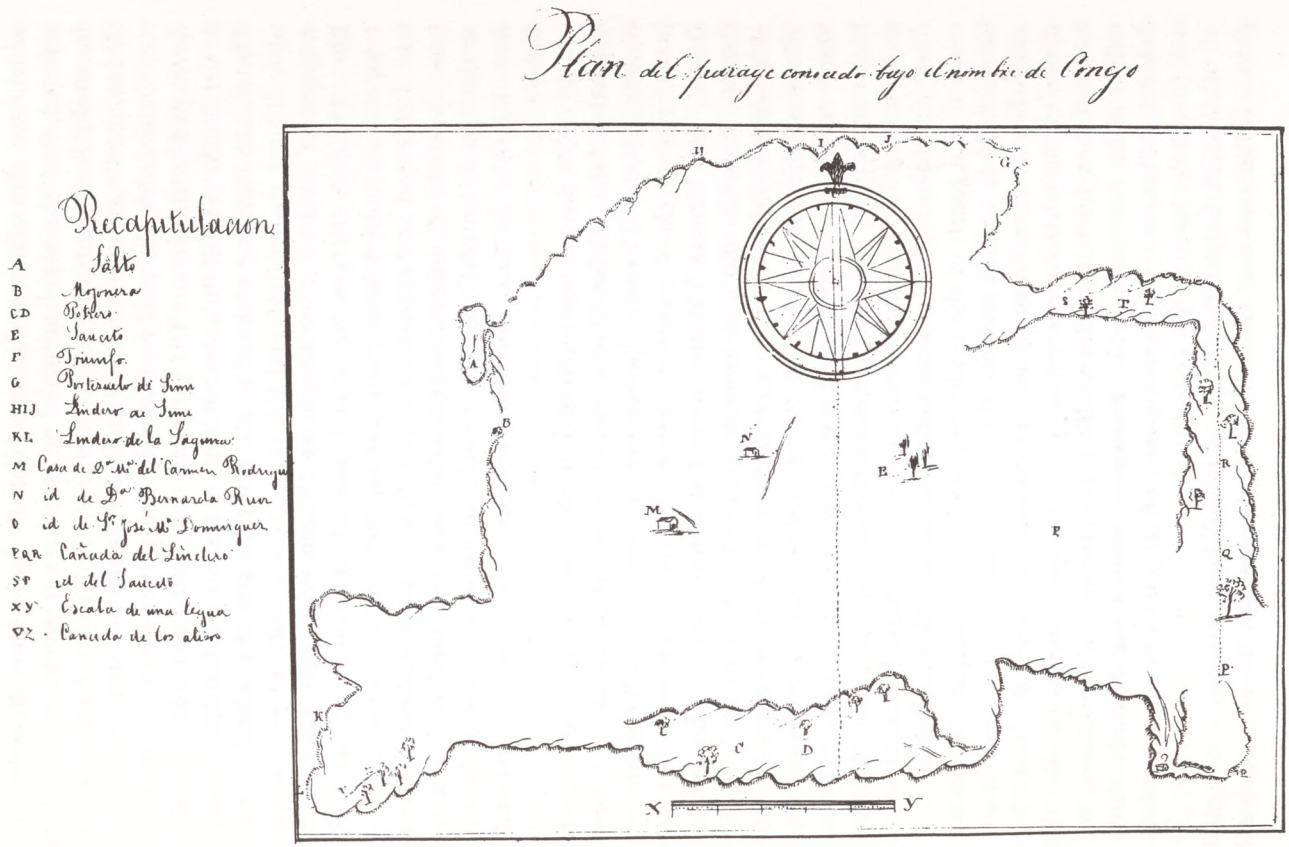
Land grant map of Maria del Carmen Lorenzana

Maria del Carmen because José de Jesus and he were both aware that it had been granted to him in 1822. Two years after the first petition by Maria del Carmen was made, the problem was resolved. In 1835 after all evidence was heard and weighed, Governor José Figueroa was to have signed a decree which stated that the undivided half of the Conejo, which was granted to José Ignacio Rodriguez in 1803, should now be shared equally by all of his heirs. When Figueroa died before the document could be signed, it was approved by José Castro in his stead. The document noted that Ignacio could have named José de Jesus as his sole heir to the rancho; but as he had not, it must revert to all of the surviving children. It was two more years before the resolution could be finally affirmed and recorded by the Santa Barbara delegation.

A petition from José de la Guerra in 1838 said that he had always had amicable relations with his comrade, José de Jesus; but he was now deceased and that he, de la Guerra, was having difficulties with the numerous Rodriguez brothers now on the rancho. He asked that Governor Alvarado appoint a referee to decide who owned what part of the Conejo Rancho. In the same year Maria Bernarda Ruiz de Rodriguez petitioned the governor for the share of the rancho which she had inherited from her husband, the deceased José de Jesus. It might be noted here that American women of this era were not usually allowed to hold property in their own names; in the late 1880's property was still listed in the name of the husband only. Spanish women were among the first who were privileged to inherit property in their own right. This right was one handed down to the women of California.

Estevan Dominguez

To further complicate the ownership problems in the Conejo José Dominguez, who resided in an adobe which would approximate the present location of Westlake Dam, petitioned in 1837 for the portion of the Conejo called El Triunfo which he claimed was uninhabited except by him. Dominguez was the grantee of the adjoining Las Virgenes Rancho and desired El Triunfo to increase his acreage. The claim, however, was not allowed for the reason that it had already been granted to José de la Guerra. Three years later



Land grant map of José de la Guerra

Maria Machado de Reyes petitioned for the same Rancho El Triunfo, which she also claimed was unoccupied. Her claim, likewise, was rejected; but she was successful in purchasing the claim of Maria Bernarda Rodriguez and her son some years later. The Reyes family members farmed in the area around Westlake for many years.

Only within the past year was the last piece owned by the Reyes developed in the area. The property had been deeded by the heirs to the Southern California Archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church. The church had long planned to use it for the site of a school; but the plan did not materialize, and the property was sold to a developer. A group of condominiums known as Triunfo West were built on the site. Through the generosity and interest of historical minded developers a beautiful monument was erected on the corner of Westlake Boulevard and Triunfo Canyon Road. It is dedicated to the memory of the Chumash Indians who once inhabited the area and to the expedition of Gaspar de Portolá and the two trips of Captain Juan Bautista de Anza through the area now known as Westlake Village.

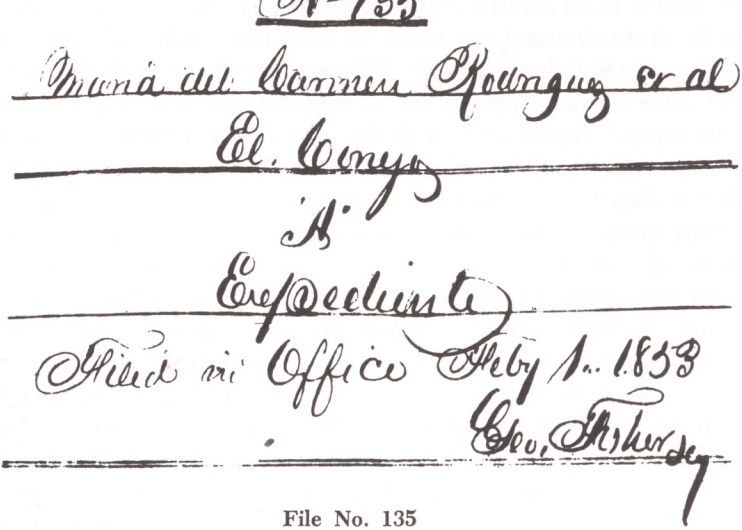
In 1839 the parties interested in the ownership of the rancho applied to the Justice of the Peace for the Municipality of Santa Barbara, Pedro Cordero, presenting evidence to substantiate the boundaries of the Conejo as claimed by them. Diego and Lucas Olivera and Vicente Valencia appeared before him and his two assistants, Luis Carrillo and Ignacio Esquer, to attest to the existence of several well known boundary landmarks of the Conejo: La Mojonera on the east; Sierra del Potrero on the south; Portezuelo del Simi[8] on the northeast corner; two sycamore trees standing by the high road leading to Las Virgenes on the east; and from La Mojonera as far as the little cañada which lies near the Agua Amarga[9] in the direction of Simi. There is no indication of any decision having been reached as a result of the evidence presented. However, the friction between de la Guerra and the Rodriguez brothers must have abated somewhat as there is no more correspondence nor complaints contained in the portfolio concerning disputes over boundaries after this time. When José de la Guerra died, his property in the Conejo was willed to his four sons: Pablo, Francisco, Miguel and Antonio Maria. Pablo and Francisco were given power of attorney as executors of the will to sell the land if they chose.

One week before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed gold was discovered at Coloma. This changed the lives of nearly all

the residents of California. The hide and tallow trade by the rancheros soon passed away when it became known that the cattle were now in great demand for meat to feed the hordes of men pouring into the area to mine for gold. There is evidence to show that many cattle were driven through the Conejo on the way north to be sold in the mines. One herd was in the care of Cave Couts of San Diego who was employed by Abel Stearns. He mentions stopping overnight at the Triunfo Rancho as they made their way north. The mustard grew so high that the cattle were sometimes lost to the view of the drovers.

In the 1860's American women began to make their appearance in Santa Barbara County. Their presence caused a subtle change to take place in a heretofore masculine migration. Miners, many of whom were not successful in their endeavors and many of whom had made money in the gold fields, began to think seriously of taking advantage of the ranchos which were being opened to settlement. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo pledged the United States to recognize legitimate titles; and a Land Commission was appointed to validate all land grants made before 1846. It convened in 1852, and heard evidence concerning claims of more than 800 grants involving more than 12,000,000 acres of land in California. The commissioners met in San Francisco (with the exception of one week when they convened in Los Angeles) which caused untold hardship for the rancheros of southern California. It was necessary for them to travel to San Francisco with their evidence and witnesses to prove their claims. Robert Glass Cleland in *The cattle on a thousand hills* quotes the historian Hittell as saying that one out of every ten of the bona fide land owners of Los Angeles County was reduced to bankruptcy by the federal land policy. At least forty percent of the land legitimately owned under grants was alienated to meet the costs of complying with the Act of 1851.

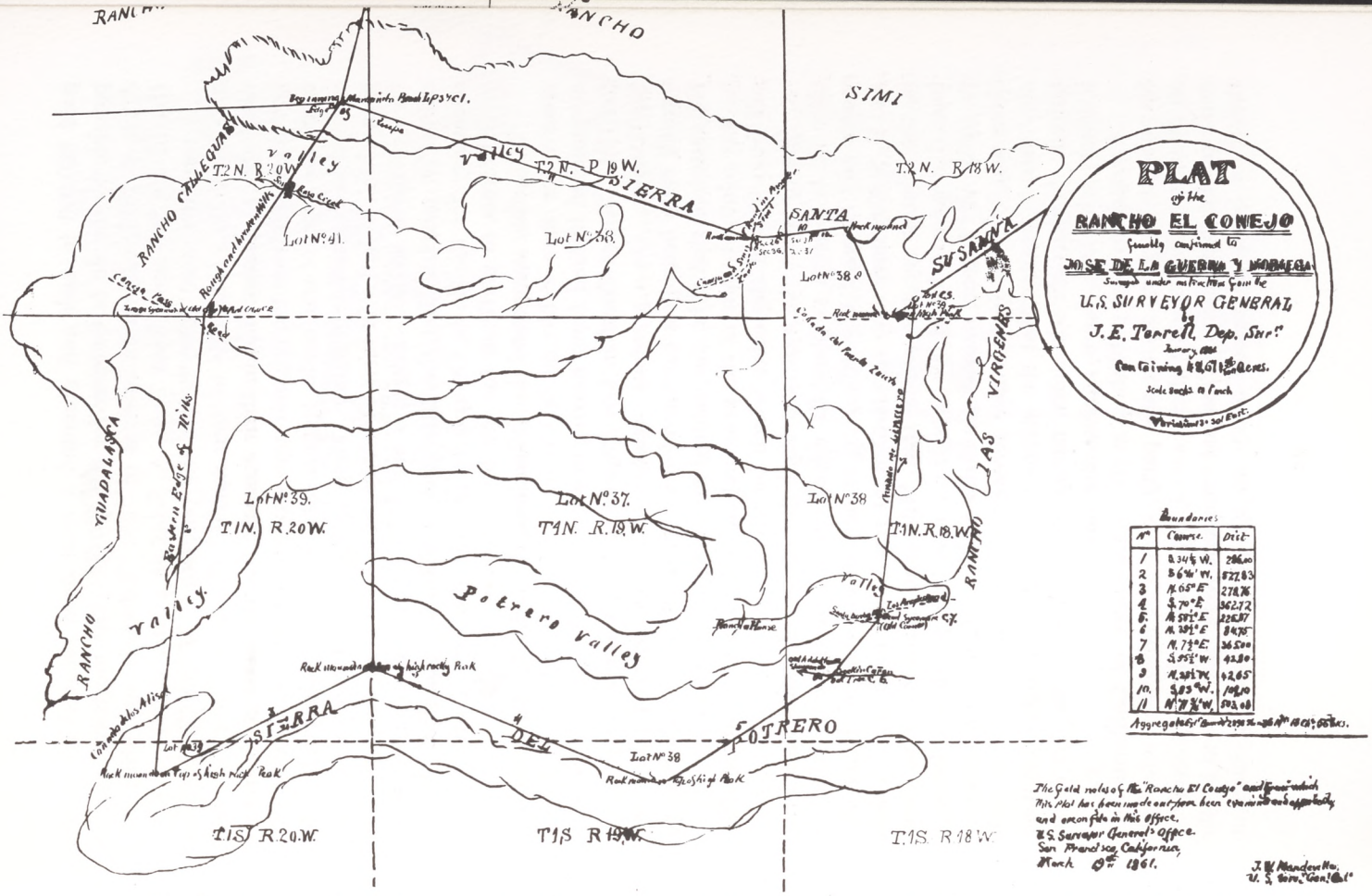
José de la Guerra had the case of Rancho El Conejo filed by the law firm of Halleck, Peachy and Billings of San Francisco. Probably because of the prominence of de la Guerra in California, his claim was given early consideration. It was assigned the low number of 135, and was heard by the commission on the occasion when it convened in Los Angeles. The existing records were translated into English and evaluated. On March 14, 1854 Commissioners Alpheus Fitch, Thompson Campbell and R. August Thompson filed their decision. After due consideration it was ruled that Rancho El Conejo



File No. 135

was indeed owned by José de la Guerra and the heirs of José Ignacio Rodriguez, who occupied the rancho in an undivided interest. The decision was appealed to the District Court of the United States in California December of 1856 with the cause entitled José de la Guerra y Noriega et al, appellees. There is nothing to indicate why it was appealed or that any action was ever taken. A survey of the rancho was finally completed under the direction of J. E. Terrell of the Surveyor General's office by March 19, 1861. The plat map was filed in the same office at that time, but a notice of approval was not published until September of 1862. It was not until ten years later that the Ventura *Signal* printed a legal notice from the U.S. Surveyor General to the effect that the patent had finally been confirmed to de la Guerra and the heirs of Ignacio Rodriguez. The patent contained 48,671.56 acres of land.

Within a week a second notice appeared announcing that John Edwards and Howard W. Mills of Santa Barbara had purchased Rancho El Conejo and would stock it with 4,500 head of sheep purchased from Captain Fairbanks. What they had actually bought was the undivided half of the Conejo owned by the de la Guerras, less 500 acres which the de la Guerras had previously conveyed to Thomas A. Scott. Their purchase of 23,835.75 acres in August of 1871 cost Edwards and Mills $55,000, or approximately $2.30 per acre. They



PLAT

of the

RANCHO EL CONEJO

formally confirmed to

JOSE DE LA GUERRA Y NORIEGA

Surveyed under instruction from the

U.S. SURVEYOR GENERAL

J. E. Torrell, Dep. Surv.

January 1861

Containing 4,460.11 Acres.

Scale 80 chs. to 1 inch

Variation 13° 30' East.

No	Course.	Dist.
1	S. 34½ W.	286.00
2	S. 6¾ W.	827.83
3	N. 65° E.	278.76
4	S. 70° E.	562.72
5	N. 59½° E.	226.87
6	N. 39½° E.	84.35
7	N. 7½° E.	36.50
8	S. 85½° W.	42.80
9	N. 39½ W.	62.65
10.	S. 83° W.	108.10
11	N. 77¾° W.	503.08

The field notes of the "Rancho El Conejo" and the work which this Plat has been made out from, have been examined and approved, and are on file in this office.

U.S. Surveyor General's Office.
San Francisco, California,
March 9th 1861.

J. W. Henderson
U. S. Surv. Gen'l Cal.

paid $20,000 in cash and executed a trust deed secured by a note payable to the de la Guerras for $35,000.00. The mortgage, due in April of 1874, carried an interest of 10%. Edwards and Mills purchased the 500 acres from Thos. A. Scott at a later date.

It was two more years before the purchasers of the Conejo were able to obtain a clear title to their ranch. The de la Guerra brothers were able to convey title to their acreage; but the heirs of Rodriguez had increased from the original nine sons and daughters, alive in 1835 when the regrant was made, to over 100 claimants to the land. This created an impossible situation. Many of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren had sold their claims in the Conejo to speculators, some for as little as $50.00. Edwards and Mills purchased as many of the claims as possible, but the title was hopelessly entangled. It was necessary for the de la Guerras to petition the First District Court of California to partition the rancho and quiet the title.

To further compound the difficulties, the judge of that court was none other than Pablo de la Guerra, one of the plaintiffs! Pablo disqualified himself from hearing the case; and it was transferred to the 17th District Court in Los Angeles, and was heard by Judge R. M. Widney. On a previous occasion Pablo was asked to disqualify himself from hearing a case involving a plaintiff who was a relative. He answered that if he disqualified himself from every case in which he was related to one of the principals he would have to absent himself from 90% of the cases which he tried!

Shortly after the suit was filed the names of Pablo and Francisco de la Guerra as plaintiffs were replaced by those of John Edwards and Howard W. Mills, now owners of one-half of the rancho, and E. S. Newbury who also had an interest in the property. A deed in the county records shows that Mills and Edwards gave Newbury that interest for $1.00. The three men then petitioned the court to strike out fifteen named plaintiffs in the original suit. One of those was Thomas Scott whose acreage was purchased, so it is probably safe to assume that the claims of the others had also been acquired. Seventy-six additional names were added to the list of defendants who had claims against the rancho.

A summons was published in the 'State paper' of California, the Sacramento *Register*, asking any party, known or unknown, who held an interest or lien against that tract of land known as the Conejo to make public their claim. Personal summons were then served by the sheriff of Santa Barbara County on all persons claiming such an

Dd BK 1 LAS POSAS pg 146

MAP
—of—
PARTITION SURVEY of RANCHO
EL CONEJO

Ventura County California
Made Under Decree of Partition
From the Seventeenth District
Court on Change of Venue From
The First District Court County
of Santa Barbara in the Case
of Edwards et al Versus Pinkard et al

Wm. P. Reynolds, John T. Stow, H. H. Thomas — Commissioners and Referees

SURVEYED
Commissioners
W. P. Reynolds and J. T. Stow
in November and December 1873
& January 1874

Ver. 14 = 15 Link Gunters Chain.
— to 1 inch —
Containing
48199.28 Acres

State of California
County of Los Angeles } ss
I, ... County Clerk and ex-officio Clerk of the District Court in and for said County, hereby Certify that this is a full true and correct tracing of the original Map on file in my office
... Clerk
By C.W. Gould Deputy

Filed May 2nd 1874
C.W. Wells Clerk
by C.W. Gould Deputy

Filed April 9th 1874 for Record at 1 o'clock P.M.
John T. Stow Recorder
by L. Budin Deputy

RANCHO SIMI

RANCHO CALLEGUAS

RANCHO GUADALASCA

T.2N.R.20.W.

T. 2.N.R.19.W.

T.2N.R.18.W.

TRACT 1 2079.49 Ac

J. EDWARDS

TRACT 5
3285.42 Ac

C.E. HUSE

E.S. NEWBERRY

T.1.N.R.20.W.

T.1.N. R.19.W.

T.1.N.R.18.W.

TRACT 4 2259.20 Ac

TRACT 3 Ac

H.W. MILLS

TRACT 2 22240.44 Ac

Ventura
SIGNAL
Oct. 13, 1874

4,000 ACRES

Choice Wheat Land for Rent,

...ON THE...

RANCHO EL CONEJO, VENtura county, at $1 per acre, in tracts as wanted. Fifteen miles from Hueneme, by a good road now being built. Enquire of E. P. FOSTER, Esq., on the Rancho, who will make contracts. By permission I refer to Messrs. Chaffee & McKeeby, of Ventura, who have a map and statement of terms.

Also a tract of land for sale in the same rancho.

28;4t HOWARD W. MILLS.

interest. Depositions were taken from these people, setting forth their reasons for asserting their right to the land. This was a time consuming process, and the final decree of partition was not forthcoming until March of 1874.

After hearing the evidence, the court issued a decree which set off: 20,790.44 acres to John Edwards; 22,240.44 acres to Howard W. Mills; 2,259.20 acres to Egbert S. Newbury; 3,285.42 acres to C. E. Huse; 225.50 acres to Carlos Garat; 47.67 acres to José del Rasane de Vidal; 47.67 acres to Francisco Vidal; 47 acres to the heirs of Miguel and Maria Manuella Peralta; 88.40 acres to Anselmo Ortega; and 250 acres to the heirs of Maria Machado Reyes. Costs of the suit were apportioned among those receiving land awards according to the number of acres they received. The total amount was nearly $8,800.00. Three unbiased commissioners were appointed and sworn in by the court. It was their duty to determine which area of the Conejo was to be occupied by the claimants. The commissioners named were John T. Stow, Henry H. Harmon and William P. Reynolds. They were authorized to employ a surveyor to assist them and were instructed to arrange for proper compensation by the grantees, if needed, to maintain equality in adjusting the quantity and quality of the acreage.

During the two years of arbitration by the court Messrs. Mills, Edwards and Newbury were not idle. They busied themselves finding buyers for the land they expected to soon own. Letters written by E. S. Newbury to his sister, Mrs. Kate Robb, in Dubuque, Iowa tell the story quite well. He speaks of living in a house in Santa Barbara, which he has rented fully furnished for $15.00 per month.

He tells of his rapid recovery from a broken leg, and mentions that he is now using crutches and is able to get up and down without assistance. He further reported that his appetite was good, that he rested well at night and his cough and lungs did not trouble him. His voice is about the same, however, just a feeble whisper.

He was intensely fascinated with the property that he had purchased in the Conejo, and said that it had advanced in price since he bought it. As a matter of fact, he had made $2,000.00 the past month as he lay on his back recovering from his fracture. He told his sister that Mr. Mills had bought 9,000 more acres in "C" (Conejo) and that Mr. Edwards, a hardware merchant in Santa Barbara, had purchased 15,000 acres at $55,000.00. Of this amount, $20,000.00 will be paid in cash and the balance in a short time. Mr. Newbury reported that there were still 18,000 acres left in the Conejo ranch and that Mr. Samuel Hill,[10] a friend of Mr. Edwards, was planning to buy it if it was possible to obtain. That would divide the Conejo ranch into three parts of about equal size, 15,000 acres to each owner. All the parties, Mr. Mills and Mr. Edwards and Mr. Hill, are congenial and good friends.

He further related to his sister that it was hard to realize the size of the Conejo grant. "It takes a whole day to drive through the MAIN valleys and as far as we can see it is all our OWN domain. We have been offered sheep by parties that have no grazing [land] for them, so I think we shall all be able to get all the stock we want on time and shares and there are a number of parties here who want to go down there for their health—so I think we shall have plenty of society. I have a first class physician in town who wants to join our COLONY. Dr. Dimick of Ottawa, Illinois lost his voice a year ago. It is a case exactly like mine. He came to San José and spent last summer, got restored and returned home. The winter broke him down again and now he is here in the same fix as I am."

Much of the letter was concerned with Newbury raising the money needed to pay Mr. Mills for the land he bought from him. He also directed his sister in the packing of goods he wished sent to him from Iowa. He gave specific instructions so that when it was unloaded from the hold of the ship into a lighter to be taken ashore the goods would not be damaged. He directed that his mail be sent to him at Santa Barbara in care of Wells, Fargo & Co. of San Francisco. Newbury was entranced with the wonderful climate of the area and commented, "the more I see and compare it with other

areas the better I am satisfied. Colonel Hollister[11] says he has not seen over 30 days of bad weather in three years." He mailed a copy of the Santa Barbara *Press* to Kate and said, "Our ranch is in the center of those T. S. Bard advertises, only up high. His are down on flat [land] and our different grades of land are better than any he asks from $1.00 to $2.00 per acre for. We have as good a ranch as in this part of the state and the CHEAPEST, but time will prove ALL THINGS."

A second letter written to Kate in December of 1873 sheds further insight into the great plans the new owners had for the land they had purchased. He wrote:

December 15, 1873.
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Dear Kittie,

Just a line tonight as I go to Conejo in the a.m. with Mr. Mills and a stranger who goes to look at our land. I telegraphed Mr. Large, also John, asking them if they would buy 300 acres in Conejo that I had the refusal of very cheap. I have heard nothing from John but Mr. Large responded at once that he would buy at $2.50 per acre. I could buy at that, but I asked Mr. L. $10,000. I answered refusing his offer and he referred me to Mr. Stebbins, so I am going to try to sell to him and make a little if I can.

Mr. Edwards offers Mr. Stebbins grazing so if he does not buy I suppose we shall have them on the Conejo on the 1st of Jan'y . . . The land I could buy at $2.50 [per acre]. I could turn it right over next month when the survey will be over, at $1.00 an acre profit.

I have spent $14.00 in two dispatches now, last year and this and not a word; but if I never tried, I would never do anything. Mr. Mills has bought this fall over 6,000 sheep and he now has nearly 20,000 acres. It is slow work getting a start, but I feel confident that I will get a good foothold somehow . . . my friends here are ready to do all in their power to help me, but some days when I don't feel well I get blue—

Fannie[12] is very well but busy working for our Christmas tree . . . I have rented a little low open old-fashioned buggy (we call it a phaeton) and I use Flora[13] to drive and feel quite independent and enjoy very much driving about. The heavy rains have brought forth the grass and everything is coming forth in its glory and now when we go to the ranch it will be much pleasanter than before. Fannie may take another trip down after New Year's and now she can dress up as much as she wishes. But for my part, I think she looks just as cute and pretty in her short dress

Egbert Starr Newbury

with a pretty ruffle on the bottom as can be. She looks like a little girl of sixteen and she is just as nice and I think a little better than the Jackson [Michigan] bride with silk suits of purple silk and fine linen. Fannie is just as good and loving as the day is long and I believe I should die of the blues if it was not for her. I must now wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and say goodnight.

Egbert

Barrel Spring

> Mr. and Mrs. Hough inquire for Auntie often. Mrs. H. is improving, but Mr. H is not in very good health. I am busy now with Dixie Thompson[14] collecting up the year's salary.

The 20,790 acres awarded to John Edwards were located north of what is now the Ventura Freeway and extended from the Conejo Grade to a line behind Builders Emporium in Thousand Oaks. The Howard Mills acreage encompassed all of what is now Hidden Valley, Westlake and Newbury Park on the south side of the freeway and North Ranch on the opposite side. His home was built at a place which would approximate the location of Westlake Bay Condominiums today. It was probably used later by the Russell family who purchased the property in 1880. The 2,200 acres purchased by Egbert S. Newbury would include what is now 'Oldtown Thousand Oaks', stretching from Hodenkamp Road on the west to Duesenburg Drive on the east. The northern boundary would parallel Falmouth Street and the southern boundary would be approximately the top of the ridge between Thousand Oaks and Hidden Valley.

Newbury, his wife Frances and small son, Egbert Starr Newbury, Jr. who was born in Santa Barbara in May of 1874, made their

home in a small cottage by the Barrel Spring. According to old U.S. geographical survey maps which show the location of homes, their house would have been located in the proximity of the Goebel Senior Citizen's Building, which is near Jungleland. There is to this day a spring located near the building. It was provided with a pressure tank some years ago and was the water source for Jungleland. The arroyo on which it is located has been filled with a large culvert for flood control and covered with dirt, but the spring still overflows into the culvert on occasion. This homesite was the first Newbury Park Post Office which was founded by Mr. Newbury, the first postmaster, in July of 1875.

C. E. Huse was a prominent attorney in Santa Barbara, and his acreage of 3,285.43 acres was located at the foot of the Conejo Grade. It was obtained by him through a purchase from Thomas Dennis. Dennis had purchased the share of Maria del Carmen Rodriguez de Lorenzana. He also claimed that he purchased the share of Maria Clemencia Arrellanes de Rodriguez, widow of Luis, and those of her children, José de Jesus Rodriguez and Feliceta Rodriguez de Dally.

Carlos Garat was awarded 225.50 acres south of that parcel given to C. E. Huse. Garat bought his property from A. Cuellar who had obtained it through several purchases from the shares belonging to the heirs of José Maria Rodriguez. This was the second son of José Ignacio and Juana Rodriguez and all of his children were residents of Santa Clara County. There is evidence to indicate that José Maria was a soldier located at Branciforte, and that he was a claimant to a land grant in the area. The sons and daughters who sold to Cuellar were: Raymundo; Domingo; Rafael; Pedro and his wife, Ascencion Ortega de Rodriguez; Maria de Presentacion Rodriguez and her husband, Geronimo Ruiz; and Antonio Maria Rodriguez and his wife, Ramona Galindo de Rodriguez. Garat also claimed to have bought the claims of Concepcion Rodriguez de Romero, Josefa Rodriguez de Romero, José Rodriguez and Antonio Lolaso, son of Maria Antonia Rodriguez de Lolaso. Concepcion claimed the shares of two deceased Rodriguez brothers. In addition Garat claimed the share of Alta Gracia Reyes de Vejar, in succession from Juan Rodriguez, which was conveyed by deed of 1858.

The Vidals and the Peraltas obtained their grant of land as heirs of sons or daughters of Ignacio; but it is not possible to trace the descent. Anselmo Ortega inherited his property because of his

descent from either Tomasa Rodriguez de Ortega or her sister, Maria Gertrudis Rodriguez de Ortega. Maria Machado de Reyes obtained her 250 acre claim by purchase from Maria Bernarda Ruiz de Rodriguez, widow of José de Jesus, and her son, Ramon. By the time the property was finally divided Maria Machado de Reyes was deceased and consequently her property was claimed by many Reyes heirs. The 250 acres given them was divided into eight parcels designated for Pablo Reyes, Angel Reyes, J. Reyes, J. M. Reyes de Bottiller, M. R. Lachnes, Rafael Reyes, José Reyes and Moses Norton. The entire 250 acres would be under Westlake now.

The Conejo Valley, which had dozed sleepily in the sun for over seventy years since it was first granted to José Rodriguez and José Polanco, began to experience an awakening. New settlers moved onto the land and built homes and barns. Large pieces of farming equipment were transported to the area by huge draft horses. Great gang plows drawn by many teams of strapping work horses carved the grassy sod for the first time. Any man, farmer or otherwise, must have felt a stirring of excitement as hundreds of acres of virgin soil were turned over by the plows, and planted to wheat and flax[15] crops. The Ventura *Signal* of December 5, 1874 highlighted the events which had taken place in the Conejo during the first year following partition. It read in part:

> . . . Mr. Edwards has recently sold about 6,000 to Mr. [Sam] Hill of Sonoma County, 4,000 acres to Mr. Johnson of the same place and 4,000 acres to Mr. [J. K.] Sexton of Santa Barbara. Mr. [C. E.] Huse sold all of his tract to Mr. Williams of this county, who has since sold off a portion of the same to Dr. C. W. Thacker, one of our supervisors. Mr. Mills sold 4,000 acres off the west end of his tract to Mr. Cutler Arnold and sons, and 3,775 acres to Captain [J. L.] Alderman and son and Olney Whiteside,[16] all of this county. These are all the sales that have been made on this rancho.
>
> Messrs. Williams and Thacker have built and are building good residences on their land, and have completed one of the largest barns in the county. They intend putting about 1,000 acres in wheat. Mr. Sexton, Jr. [Joseph A. Sexton] has built a neat dwelling house and good barn,

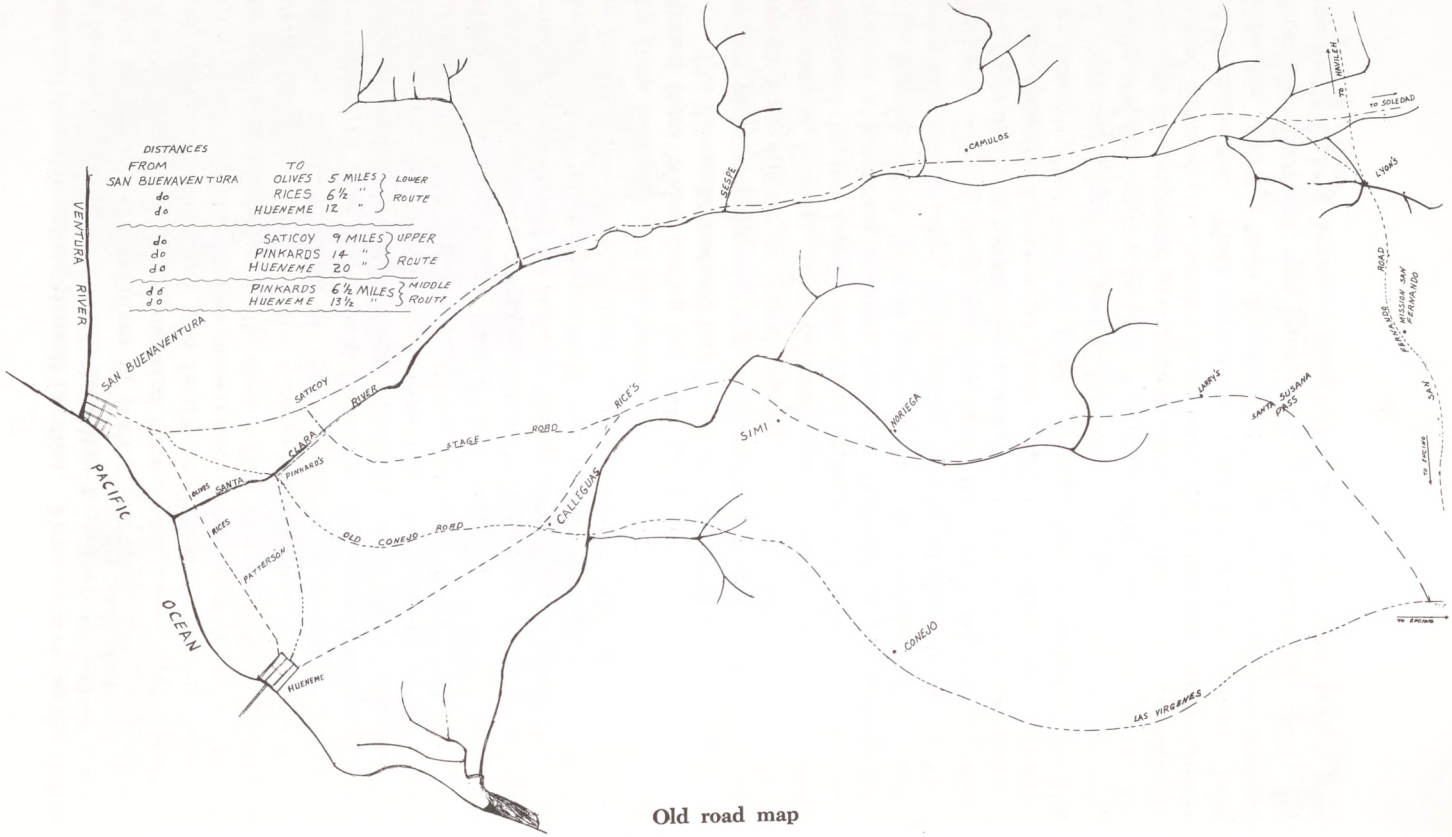
and will raise wheat enough for hay. Mr. Edwards has built a dwelling house and good barn, but will not cultivate any this year. Mr. Newberry[17] has built a very pretty cottage by the 'barrel spring' and has made his home there. He will soon build a barn. The Messrs. Arnold have built dwelling houses and large barns and will sow 600 acres in wheat. Captain Alderman and son and Mr. Whiteside have built temporary barns and dwellings and will put about 800 acres in wheat on their own and Mr. Mills' land. Mr. Brown of Saticoy will put 200 acres of wheat on Mr. Mills' land. J. Z. Barnett, County Assessor, has rented 500 acres of Mr. Newberry for three years and is now at work plowing for wheat. Mr. Mills will put in 300 acres of wheat and has formed a partnership with Mr. W. D. F. Richards of Saticoy for raising flax. They have purchased of Messrs. Chaffee & McKeeby a nine-gang plow which Mr. Beers will drive with his ten heavy horses, and 'Portugese Charley' will drive his four horses to a two-gang plow, all for flax. They will sow about 600 acres. E. P. Foster, Esq. is superintendent for Mr. Mills and has built a very neat cottage of six rooms. With his family he occupies this dwelling, and will soon build another for Mr. Mills who will shortly remove there with his family of three little girls. Mrs. Woods, Mrs. Foster's mother, will also make her home there. Mr. Foster has also built for Mr. Mills a very large barn and has it well filled with hay.

Mr. Sexton has 1,700 sheep on his land. Mr. Newberry has 2,500. Messrs. Edwards, Hill and Foster are in partnership in sheep on the lands of Messrs. Edwards and Hill under the firm name of Foster & Company, and have some 7,000 sheep. Mr. Mills has 5,500 sheep, one band of which, 2,400 in number, is the finest band of its size in the county. They were raised by J. W. Cooper, Esq. of Santa Rosa Rancho, are all of one lambing and shear over eight pounds of wool per year. There are now over 100 heavy work horses plowing on the Conejo, with seven large chisel cultivators, one large nine-gang plow and three two-gang plows. This is the first season. Next season from 10,000 to 15,000 acres will be cultivated. Two new roads have been built to the ranch this season, one of them through the Guadalasca Rancho, which has a grade of only six inches to the rod.[18] Arrangements are now being made to induce the stage company to run their stages from here to Los Angeles through the Conejo, thus giving the occupants a daily mail . . .

The week following the printing of the article on what had been done on the Conejo, a second appeared. The author is not known, but it was signed with an "H", and carries an excellent description of the rancho:

. . . In your last issue I read a short article descriptive of the Conejo, or more particularly of the improvements being made there, which reminds me of my visit there some two years ago when I thought I had seldom, if ever, beheld so lovely a spot—or perhaps I should more properly say landscape for its beauty is not confined to any particular locality but extends throughout the whole valley or plateau (a distance of perhaps 15 miles in this county and several miles beyond in Los Angeles County). In general appearance it very much resembles the lower Ojai Valley. The soil is very similar, there being however more of the rich black soil of the Upper Ojai. The whole length of the valley is lined with beautiful live and white oaks for a distance, in some places, of two and three miles in width. The bed of a stream meanders through it, which in winter must convey considerable water; but at the dry season when I was there contained but little. There were, however, springs of good water every half mile or mile along it. The sheep pasture on each side of this valley extends quite up to the summit of the mountains in most places, and is of an extraordinarily rich quality. There was one piece of wheat growing at that time on the ranch of Mr. Reyes, as fine looking as I have ever seen. I well remember then becoming impressed with the belief that this valley was destined to be the great wheatfield of our county. My direction was also called to the facility of obtaining a cheap and direct route through this valley to Los Angeles. Mr. Reyes informed me that the road was then very passable from his place to Los Angeles (he being, as he said, able to haul 1,500 to 2,000 pounds with one span of horses) and on our return to this place, I found the route we came to be almost direct. Standing upon the top of the mountain immediately back of and nearly east from the Pleasant Valley School House (for we came down the trail[19] that leads past it) we could see the brick kiln crossing of the Santa Clara [River] in a direct line with the mission, and this great valley [Conejo] stretching in an opposite direction toward Los Angeles. I do not know if this trail I speak of has ever been prospected with a view of securing a wagon road through it, but am satisfied a good easy grade can be secured at a trifling cost when we consider the advantage of securing the trade of this valley which is destined in a very few years to be the home of hundreds of families and that those residing there now deal principally at Los Angeles. It is to be hoped that our supervisors will look into the matter, for we should certainly lose some of the trade of our own county.

The relationship of many of the families who settled or purchased land on the Conejo was intricately interwoven. This was not an


DISTANCES
FROM
TO
SAN BUENAVENTURA
OLIVES 5 MILES } LOWER
do RICES 6½ " } ROUTE
do HUENEME 12 "
do SATICOY 9 MILES } UPPER
do PINKARDS 14 " } ROUTE
do HUENEME 20 "
do PINKARDS 6½ MILES } MIDDLE
do HUENEME 13½ " } ROUTE
VENTURA RIVER
SAN BUENAVENTURA
SATICOY
RIVER
SESPE
CAMULOS
TO SOLEDAD
LYONS
SAN FERNANDO MISSION AND SAN FERNANDO ROAD
STAGE ROAD
RICE'S
SIMI
MORIEGA
LARRY'S
SANTA SUSANA PASS
SANTA CLARA RIVER
IRVINE
PINKARDS
RICES
PACIFIC OCEAN
PATTERSON
OLD CONEJO ROAD
CALLEGUAS
HUENEME
CONEJO
LAS VIRGENES
TO SAN FERNANDO

Old road map

unusual situation among pioneer families. From as early as the 1620's a family migrating to another area was frequently joined at a later date by friends and relatives in earlier ventures. One large group of early New Englanders migrated from Massachusettes to Connecticut, thence to New York and finally to Illinois by way of the 'new Erie Canal' in 1833. A few moved first and they were soon followed by others in what historically were called migration trails. Many of those families settling in the Conejo were called to California because of the Gold Rush of 1849. Some were drawn to the small settlement of Ione in the gold fields for one reason or another, and became well acquainted there. Children of many of the families intermarried, forging an even closer bond between them all. Some of these families included were the Edwards, Sextons, Fosters and Hills. R. K. Sexton and Isaac Foster probably read the same advertisement in the newspaper which declared that the Goleta Rancho, formerly owned by Rafaela Ortega de Hill and Daniel Hill, was being sold by their heirs. Both men purchased land on the rancho in 1868 and brought their families to live there. They were followed by John Edwards and his brother, Samuel, both of whom had emigrated from Wales during the 1849 gold rush.

The Edwards brothers had found it more profitable to engage in selling picks and shovels, and all manner of hardware to the miners rather than engage in actual mining. Late in 1869 they moved to the area of Goleta. John Edwards purchased a ranch there which remained in the family for three generations. The two brothers opened a hardware business in Santa Barbara in partnership with Mr. Boeske, which proved to be a very successful venture. Later John Edwards became the founding director of three banks of Santa Barbara. One of these was the Santa Barbara Gold Bank, another the Santa Barbara Savings Bank which later became the Commercial Bank, then the Commercial Trust and Savings Bank and still later the Security-First National Bank. George Sexton Edwards, the son of John and Elizabeth Sexton Edwards, was president of the latter bank; and the leading banker of Santa Barbara for forty years. He was also the respected and popular mayor of that city. Charles and Alfred Edwards, his two brothers, were also prominent early bankers of the same era. Their only sister, Anna, was a bank cashier. John Edwards, who has been described as being of an extremely shy and modest temperment, was born in Shropshire, England in 1826. He married Elizabeth Sexton, a daughter of R. K. and Anna Sexton, who

John Edwards

Elizabeth Sexton

was born in Illinois in 1839 and came with her family to California in 1852. The four children of John and Elizabeth Edwards were all natives of Ione. George, the eldest was probably named for Elizabeth's next older brother, and was given her maiden name. He married Anna McLaren of a well known Santa Barbara family.

It is not known if the John Edwards lived in the house they built on the Conejo, although it is known that they visited there frequently. The house stood near the location of the new shopping center now being built below the city hall. This was also the location of the O. A. Wadleigh home. The Wadleighs, Orville and Gertrude, farmed the Edwards property on a rental basis for forty years. Joe Russell, in his book *Cattle on the Conejo,* remarked that Mr. Wadleigh leased the land from Edwards the entire time without any kind of written contract. At the close of each year he took his

OA Orville A. Wadleigh OA

O. A. Wadleigh with his threshing gang

records to Mr. Edwards; and if it had been a drought year or one in which the crops had not done well, Edwards voluntarily reduced the rental.

The first piece of property purchased in the Conejo by the Janss family contined 4,500 acres, and included the part farmed by the Wadleighs. The grant deed was issued in 1912 to Harold and Gladys Janss by the heirs of John and Elizabeth Edwards: George, Charles, Alfred and Anna. The acreage included what is now Los Robles Hills, all of the shopping area along both sides of Moorpark Road, Shadow Oaks, Conejo Hills, Conejo Country Homes, Sunset Conejo, Old Meadow, Conejo Oaks, Kevington, Oak Crest, Starview, Waverly Hills, New Meadows and Westgate Estates. Gladys Janss was the daughter of Arthur Letts, the founder of the Broadway Stores and later Bullocks. Mr. Letts purchased all that was left intact of the original grant known as Rancho San José de Buenos Aires. It was the rancho granted to José Polanco and Maximo Alanis in 1840. Letts sold 384 acres of the rancho in 1929 to six towns served by Wilshire Boulevard. They in turn made a gift of the land, which they purchased for $1,319,539, to the State of California; and the University of California at Los Angeles was built there. The Janss brothers, Harold and Dr. Edwin, had successfully developed the San Fernando property of Harry Chandler and his associates; and they were given the task of developing the first planned community, which was Westwood, for Mr. Letts. Holmby Hills in that locality, was named for Mr. Letts home in England.[20]

The Isaac Foster family was another which crossed the plains to California in 1849. Judge Isaac G. Foster was a lawyer and minister and he settled with his family in the area of San José. His son, of the same name, was at one time the alcalde of San José. Isaac Foster, Jr. and his wife, Roxanna, moved to Goleta in 1868. They were the parents of four children including Eugene P. Foster and Lucy Foster who were born in Illinois, Fred who was born near Ogden, Utah enroute to California and Frank who was born in San José. E. P. Foster, who was ranch superintendent for H. W. Mills, married Orpha Woods. Their first daughter, Orpha Woods Foster, who was born in June of 1875, was likely the first American baby on the Conejo. Their residence at the time of her birth would have been in the Westlake area. Miss Foster died at the age of 97 in 1973, having been a resident of Ventura County for all of her life. Mr. Foster became a very prominent banker in Ventura. He had a

O. A. Wadleigh with his threshing gang

life long passion for trees, and donated acreage for the first Ventura County park. He was also instrumenttal in obtaining other gifts of land donated to the County of Ventura for parks.

One of his favorite recollections was of his first trip to the county in 1871. In the vicinity of the Santa Clara River, he stood on the seat of his wagon and could barely see over the tops of the giant mustard plants. E. P. Foster purchased 807 acres of land from John Edwards for $8,000 in 1876. The parcel stood on the western edge of Rancho El Conejo, north of the present freeway. During the great drought of 1876-1877 he and many others of the Conejo met with financial distaster and lost both their land and their livestock. Foster then became the ditch foreman for the Santa Ana Water Company. In addition he planted and developed 200 acres of apricot trees on a share basis, which he later sold to the Bank of Ventura for $10,000. Within a few years he became the cashier of the bank, and was later its president for many years.

Lucy Foster, his sister, married Josph A. Sexton, a son of Richard K. and Anna Claypool Sexton in Goleta in 1869. The Richard Sextons came to California from Ohio in 1852. They embarked on a steamer, traveling to Panama. The family then rode by muleback across the isthmus. During the crossing one of the mules was mired in quicksand and died. After the harrowing crossing the family waited on the western side for six weeks before they could get passage on a ship headed for San Francisco. The total trip time was six months. The children who came with their parents were Joseph A. Sexton, William, George, Elizabeth and Lewis who was born the year they left Ohio. They lived in Ione for a time where they planted a peach orchard from pits the boys had gathered up from where they had been thrown on the ground. The orchard froze; but the Sexton's experimented with budding and grew fruit and vegetables which they sold.

Joseph and William learned the nursery business; and when the family moved to Petaluma, William managed the plant nursery that they purchased there. In 1868 the family moved to Goleta. Joseph joined them there at a later date, at which time he purchased land from his father and started a nursery. His venture was successful partly because he was very progressive. He developed the Santa Barbara soft shelled walnut, and introduced the Norfolk Island Pine tree to southern California. In 1872 he started growing pampas grass, which became popular for home decorating. His son, Horace

Hammell House

Sexton, in *Fourteen at the table* says that half a millon plumes of the pampas grass were sold in 1889 at $200 per thousand. Joseph and Lucy reared a family of twelve children, there being six boys and six girls. Family members have farmed near the Mound area of Ventura for many years.

R. K. and Anna Sexton and Joseph and Lucy Sexton were caught up in the land boom fever, and were induced to speculate by buying 4,200 acres in the Conejo in 1874. They sold it the following year to James Hammell and Asa Adams who were partners in a real estate company in Santa Barbara. The Santa Barbara County census of 1870 reports that Hammell was 42 years old and lived with his wife, Martha, and year old daughter, Hatty, in Santa Barbara at 721 De la Vina Street where the home is still being used as a residence. His birthplace was Ohio and he was a carpenter by trade. Asa Adams was a butcher who migrated from New York. His wife, Siren, was from Kentucky; and they were the parents of two small daughters, both of whom were born in California. Eber and Freelove Adams, the parents of Asa, had also come from New York and lived near their son and daughter-in-law in Carpinteria. James Hammell bought out the share of Asa Adams in the 4,200 acre parcel in 1876, paying $13,000.00 in gold.

In April of that year an item in the Ventura *Signal* noted that a hotel was projected for the Conejo. Mr. Hammell planned to build it on his property, and the lumber was already on the site. The opening was probably planned for July 4, 1876 to take advantage of the centennial celebration. Citizens from all surrounding towns were urged to attend. A January newsletter in *The Signal,* authored by E. S. Newbury, stated that the Conejo was as good or better for invalids than the Ojai Valley. He wrote that since residing on the Conejo he had regained the use of his voice. Mr. Hammell planned that the hotel would be a health and summer resort, and advertised that he would sell a lot for a nominal price to anyone who would build a cottage on it.

Meanwhile the steamer in Santa Barbara continued to discharge its load of health seeekers and tourists attracted by articles printed in eastern newspapers and in Europe, which touted the salubrious climate of southern California. The Ventura *Signal* continues to tell the story of the development of the Conejo on December 18 of 1875 from a Coast Line stage:

> . . . When the foot of the grade leading into the Conejo Mountain valley is reached, all the passengers, eight jolly souls of different nationalities, tumble out to lighten the heavy wagon. When at the top of the grade and we looked down upon the scene, I could easily understand why so many people have spoken in seemingly extravagant language of the Conejo and its rich soil and beautiful scenery. The strong growth of grass and volunteer grain gave the best proof of the superior quality of its soil. If a man would be delighted with the first view of its gently sloping sward and flats, he would be charmed when he reached the middle and upper end of the ranch where the huge white and the spreading live oaks abound. The erectness of the trees prove that no strong winds prevail in this lovely valley. In Sonoma and many of the bay counties the trees lean from the sea, many of them with their heads and trunks almost prostrated by the strong breezes which unceasingly blow over them. Not so in the Conejo; here the strong soil hundreds of years ago sent forth the tender shoots from the acorns and has in the years gone by, warmed by the eternal summer sun, developed them into trees five and six feet in diameter. Among these giant oak trees the town of Newbury Park is located. This little village, if such it can be called, was laid off by the owner of this portion of the ranch, E. S. Newbury, a gentleman who came to this place from Dubuque, Iowa where by exposure to rigors of the climate of

that region his throat became so affected that he could not speak above a whisper. He was led to believe that the climate of Santa Barbara was, above all other places, speicfic for his disease. After spending several months there, being somewhat relieved but not cured, he concluded as many others should do, to go to mountains. He was induced to purchase an interest in the Conejo and now rejoices, after living there several months, in improved general health and in a restoration of his voice. His cure is due to the warmer and drier atmosphere of the mountains. The town of Newbury Park lies 1,700 feet above the sea level, and is indeed most delightfully located where an abundance of water can be had for the digging, where wood abounds without limit and where frost rarely comes and the soil will produce the semi-tropical fruits and those of temperate zone as well as corn, all the cereals . . .

Howard W. Mills, who was awarded the largest tract of land on the Conejo, built his home and started a small settlement in what was to be the forerunner of Westlake Village. He was a progressive man with a great deal of vision and he hoped in time to found a town complete with church and school. He donated the land for the first public school in the Conejo Valley, and was one of the first trustee along with Olney Whiteside and J. P. Cutler. He acted as a tax assessor-collector, and probably arranged for the construction of the school building which is believed to have been built by a Mr. Richardson. The cost was $750. The first to exist was the Triunfo School which was held in Mr. Mills' home in 1876 and taught by Miss Anderson. She was the daughter of M. L. Anderson who lived near the Mills. Conejo School District, which encompassed the whole of Conejo Valley, was formally designated in March of 1877 by the Board of Supervisors. Church services were inaugurated in the Mills' home, also. There is no indication of who the pastor was although the Reverend J. L. McLaren preached for a time in 1875 when he was visiting his daughter and family, the Joseph Howards.

Mills was born in 1832 in New Jersey. Seven generations of his family had resided in Morristown. He moved to Indianapolis in his teens, and went into the mercantile business. In 1862 he moved to St. Paul, Minnesota because his doctor told him he would not live more than six weeks. The Minnesota climate helped him and he became a prominent citizen and real estate developer until his health failed again. In 1870 he and his wife, Carolyn Freeman Mills, and their three small daughters (Mary Este, Katherine and Anna) made a trip to California. They were accompanied by Mrs. Alward. A

Carolyn Freeman
and
Howard W. Mills

letter written by him to Katherine on the occasion of her 31st birthday in 1900 says they traveled to San José where they planned to winter. The climate, however, did not agree with them and they moved to San Francisco. His letter continues, "Los Angeles was an unknown Mexican town, but we heard it was a land of sunshine and oranges and flowers—We sailed on the William Tabor [from San Francisco] and after a delightful trip arrived in San Pedro. Cars brought us to the city of Los Angeles where with many and varied changes we have remained, you and I."

In 1871 he returned to Minnesota and sold out his business and again made the trip to California, this time to Santa Barbara. A letter written in 1912 says, "I had 'sheep disease', which was very common then. I bought a large ranch and several thousand sheep and planted thousands of acres of wheat. I thought I was on the sure road to fortune. But the winter of 1876-1877 we had no rain and as a consequence there was no grass and no wheat—no nothing—the land too, all went. I came here [to Los Angeles] in the Fall of 1881 to try my fortune again." A letter from Mrs. Mills written from Minneapolis to her sister in Chicago in 1873 says that the children are still in California. She and Howard have just bought a home in Minneapolis and will send for the children to come back. They planned to buy new furniture as it was too costly to have theirs shipped from California. She mentioned that she was feeling some better and had gained 30 pounds. She said further, "My cough still hangs on and I haven't my strength back." Howard will soon have

to leave to return to California. No records have been found to indicate what happens to Mrs. Mills; but it is likely that she did not recover from her illness, for in 1874 her husband and the three girls left Minnesota a second time to make their residence in California. Mrs. Mills did not accompany them. It required eight days, probably by rail, to arrive in San Francisco. They embarked from there on a steamer to Santa Barbara.

Kitty appears to have resided with the L. G. Oliver family in Santa Barbara to enable her to go to school. At times all three girls remained with the Olivers; and there were frequent letters written to them by a loving father, which give us an excellent account of the happenings on the Conejo a century ago. One written to the girls in February of 1875 says that Mr. and Mrs. Hubbard and Mary had left by stage for Los Angeles. "Later that day the rain fell and the strongest wind I ever saw here brought down two limbs from the tree by the well. From Brown's house to this—in every direction—was a lake of water. The creek [Triunfo] is very high, but the water is now draining off. Mr. Brown brought 10 Spanish horses to my corral this morning. The owners [Reyes] don't like it! This afternoon I rode with Brown to Whiteside's. The pony is well. The children love her as much as you do. The little boy[21] wanted me to write to Mary and Kittie to come and play with him. When I come to Santa Barbara if your hats are pretty, I will let you ride in my new buggy which is still in Santa Barbara." On another occasion he mentions that the old yellow dog given to them by Captain Alderman had given birth to nine puppies and the cat had seven kittens in the barn. He had named them Adam, Eve, Abraham, Abazual, Job, Solomon and Mahalaleelhasbaz. On July 22 of the same year he wrote:

> . . . Mr. and Mrs. Spencer came to see about living on the Conejo and taking care of you. I hope it will be pleasant; if not, I will never try again on the ranch. They have been living at Captain Alderman's for a year past. They will come in six weeks and spend a week or two in fixing up the house—before they want to see you, we will cloth and paper the rooms and make them nice. Mrs. Spencer will keep them clean. She is a nice cook, not raw beans, heavy or sour bread! I will have my cow and they will bring one, so you will have plenty of milk and butter. I will get some chickens and a pair of black pigs for Mary and Kittie to play with. Mr. Cutler's family will live in the 'Bell House' 'till they can build, not far from our house. They have four children, 2 boys and two girls. Mary's pony is still

at Whitesides. I want to have a school here as soon as possible. That is one reason I want you to come. We will finish the new room and for the present have it for the school room. My orchard is all sold, so I will set out another one next winter. How long you will all want to stay here, I don't know; but I will try to make it pleasant for you. Chislett is still about here but will leave before Spencers arrive. Mrs. Stebbins has a little boy, and Newbury and his wife have removed to Santa Barbara for a time. On or about the first of August Whiteside's threshing crew will move into the Bell house while at work there.

Love, Father.

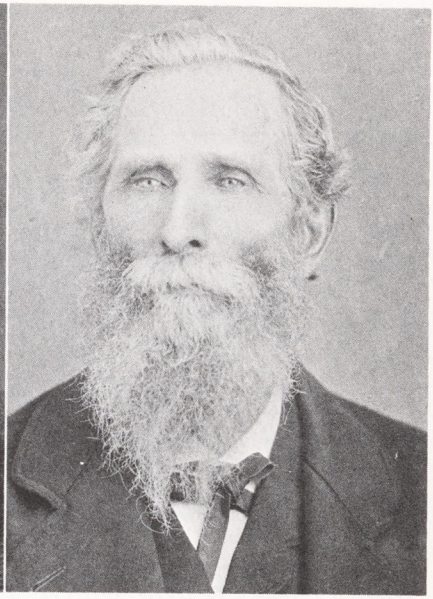
On September 1, 1875 he wrote that he had voted at Pleasant Valley School and that he had received a card from Anna from the stage driver. He promised to send her some money; but, he said, everyone is broke here for the present. An undated letter to the girls said that he expected a visit from José Reyes and Frank. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Howard had gone to the Santa Clara Valley; and Mrs. Wilson would stay with Mrs. Howard, but Mills must stay alone. An old man called Frank had gone out in the mountains to hunt deer. He had promised to bring Mills one which he planned to 'jerk'. Mr. and Mrs. (E. P.) Foster, he said, would live in the next house awhile. Mr. Foster was planning to plow for Howard in back of Mills' barn.

A school essay written by Anna was sent to her father for comment and it reads:

RANCH LIFE

I think ranch life is very pleasant, especially the one I enjoyed on the Conejo. From the front porch we can see the San Bernardino Mountains 120 miles off. We can see the snow on them 'till in July. Back of the house, 1½ miles on a smooth level road, is the Potrero Valley. It is one of the most beautiful valleys I ever saw, with cañons running in every direction from it and beautiful oaks scattered about. In the spring the ground was covered with wild pansies. Around the house are hills from ½ to 3 miles off with occasional groups of trees all about. We have 3 very large oaks near the house, one of them with 120 foot spread of branches; and last year it bore 2 tons of acorns. I will tell you how the shepherds live. They have a house 6 x 8 feet with a bunk at one end. The cooking utensils are a coffee pot, frying pans and a kettle for beans. One shepherd with his wife and child live now in a tent under a large cottonwood tree just as Sarah and Abraham of old time lived. The daily stage runs within ¾ of a mile of the house and a post office has been established. We can mail our letters every day when only a few months ago we had

Emily Hough



Cutler Arnold

to go to Ventura, 30 miles. 2 miles from our house is Newbury's house. Mr. Newbury laid out a town called Newbury Park and it consists of 2 houses, a shanty and a barn. We have no preaching on Sunday, but have Sunday School at our house. We have almost no society except the family living in the next house. Yet we enjoyed living there. We rode in the wagon and horseback over the hills, through the valleys and occasionally had a picnic under the trees. I hope to return after awhile for a visit when free from school. Papa and I will run races on horseback. The best three in five wins. Don't you think I'll beat?

H. W. Mills sold off many large parcels of his acreage, including 5,500 acres to Cutler Arnold and his sons in 1876. Arnold sold at a later date to Johannes Borchard and W. R. Broome. Olney Whiteside purchased 3,672 acres next to the Arnold prpoerty and moved there with his family. Both the Arnolds and the Whitesides had come across the prairies during the gold rush. Colonel and Mrs.

WB William Richard Broome WB

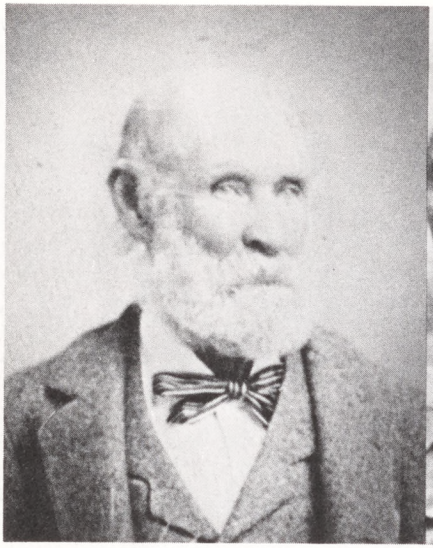
Joseph Howard ranch

Leigh French and Benjamin Hampton bought most of the Whiteside acreage in 1924. The last segment was sold to the Talley family sometime later. Captain J. I. Alderman and his son moved next to Whiteside, and the Michael Reilly ranch was probably next to his. Joseph and Isabell McLaren Howard purchased 8,476 acres from Mills in 1875 for $23,000, and built their home and barn not too far from the Mills' home. Isabell McLaren was a sister to Mrs. George Sexton Edwards' wife, Anna, which further complicated the relationship of many of the families living on the Conejo.

H Joseph Howard H

Joseph Howard, Sr. was born to a prominent family of Hartford Connecticut. A family legend says that the Howards were good friends of Samuel L. Clemens in the east; and that this famous writer known as Mark Twain, visited them on their ranch in Potrero Valley on two occasions. He is said to have shot and killed an immense mountain lion while visiting there. The Howard home and barn were located near the present site of the Evenstar Park in Westlake. Their daughter and her husband lived in a house nearby. May (or Mary) Howard was married to Henry T. Stebbins of Toledo,

Howard and Stebbins homes in Potrero Valley



Samuel Hill

Sarah Middleton

Ohio in a ceremony performed at the Howard home in 1875. The Ventura *Signal* notes that it was the first wedding on the Conejo. The clergyman was the Reverend J. L. McLaren of Detroit, Michigan who was visiting his family on the Potrero.

8H Joseph R. Howard 8H

Joseph Howard, Jr. purchased 100 acres from his father and he too ranched on the Conejo. He married a daughter of Mrs. Sam Hill, Elizabeth Middleton. A second daughter, Sarah Middleton, married William Rotzler from another early Ventura County family; and Margaret Middleton married George Worts. Anthony and Thomas Middleton, the two sons, were early ranchers in the Conejo and on the Santa Rosa Ranch owned by their mother and step-father, Samuel

98 Mrs. Sam Hill 98

Hill Ranch House

Samuel and Sarah Hill

Hill. The Middleton children were all born in Ione where their widowed mother met and married Sam Hill. They too purchased a large acreage from John Edwards in 1874, and lived on the Conejo for many years. A portion of their holdings were eventually purchased from their heirs by the Janss Company.

The elder Howards retired to Santa Barbara after selling their ranch in 1888 to the Banning Company of Long Beach. The owners were Katherine, Anna Ophelia, William, Josef and Hancock Banning. They built the Lake Eleanor dam in 1889, which is thought to be the first concrete dam ever poured. They ran cattle on the ranch

and eventually sold it to F. W. Mathiesson, Jr. in 1894. About this time they purchased their Catalina Island holdings. Mr. Mathiesson's father built Lake Mathiessen about 1905; and they laid plans for a plush summer resort for wealthy Los Angeles residents. The plans went awry when the younger Mathiessen was divorced by his wife, Elsie; and she was given the lake as part of the divorce settlement. She married a Mr. Canterbury at a later date and it was called Lake Canterbury for a time.

In 1929 the name was changed to Los Touras Lake by a real estate firm who planned a housing development there. Los Touras was a name created to commemorate the two Counties of Los Angeles and Ventura. The depression began and the plans were abandoned. It was at this time that Potrero Valley was given the name of Hidden Valley for the developers feared that no one would be able to pronounce the appropriate Spanish name which means a pasture. The name which endured, that of Lake Sherwood, was applied when the movie *Robin Hood* was filmed in the area. The oak forest below the dam was dubbed Sherwood Forest; and a park-like area on the south side of the lake is still named Maid Marian Park on county maps. Mrs. M. R. Miller, a daughter of Joe and Henrietta Russell,

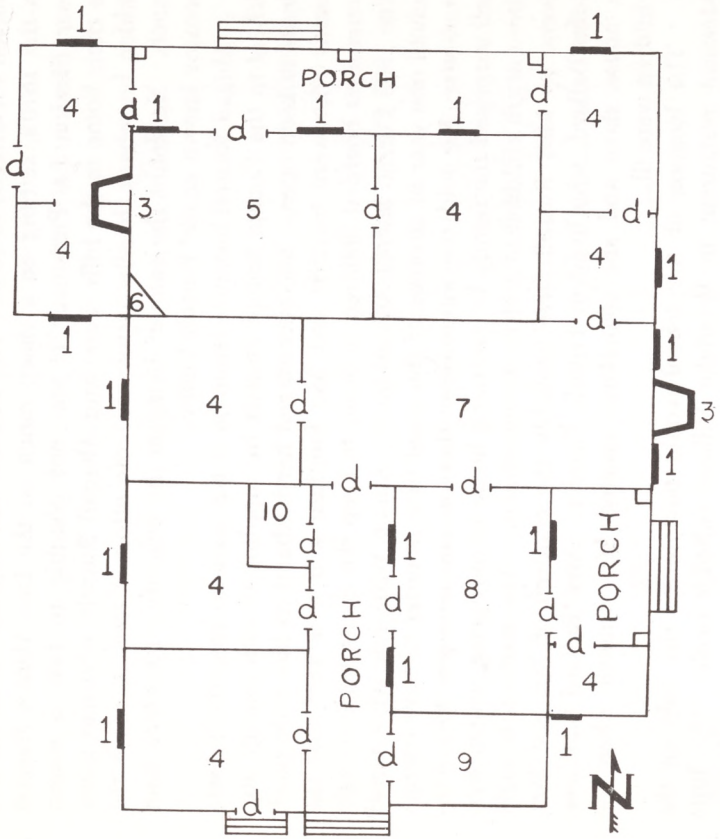
Lake Eleanor

says at times it was also known as Russell Lake. The right of way given to the county by Joseph Howard was covered up when the lake was filled. This gave the county a right to demand that it be drained if they chose. Finally a new right of way was negotiated in the 1920's and Mr. Mathiessen gave the County of Ventura the land for the present road which is now north of the lake.

Mr. Mills left the area of Westlake in 1881 after suffering from financial reverses. The San Francisco Savings Bank, which held the mortgage, sold the property from the court house steps for $23,000. His home had housed the stage stop and hotel for several years; and in addition he was postmaster of Newbury Park with the post office located in his home. He wrote in 1879 that he planned to move the house, formerly occupied by Mr. Fish, from its location nearby by means of twelve horses and skids. Then, he said, our elegant and commodious hotel will stand thus like his drawing is. His letter

continued, "The post office is desirable because it brings something new everyday and brings people here so we can see someone. The profits are small. The hotel part is not so desirable but is not so bad as we feared. We have found it more pleasant than we expected; and since we have good help, it is better than living alone."

After leaving the Conejo Mills moved to Los Angeles and returned to the real estate business, eventually recouping the fortune he had lost in his farming venture. He developed the Mills Tract at 4th Street and Los Angeles Avenue; and a building at that location still bears the name of Mills on it. A history of Los Angeles written by Wm. A. Spalding says that Howard Mills did more for the City of Los Angeles than any other one man. He sold the site for the old city hall to the city, and developed many housing tracts in town. He helped lay out the Lick Tract which became part of Hollywood, and also the City of Long Beach. The Union Rescue Mission was formed in his home at the 4th and Los Angeles location, and he was an early president of the Y.M.C.A. Also he was a founding trustee of both Occidental and Pomona Colleges, and a deacon of the First Congregational Church for 30 years. Howard Mills lost his sight at the age of 80 and then learned to read Braille; his first translation was his favorite book of the *Bible, S. John.* He died at age 86, survived by his second wife and two of his daughters, Mary Este Mills and Katherine Mills Clapp. His only grandchild, Dwight Mills Clapp, preceded him in death.



H.W. MILLS RESIDENCE

RANCHO EL CONEJO, A.D. 1881

1. WINDOWS
d. DOORS
3. FIRE PLACES
4. BED ROOMS
5. LIVING ROOM
6. POST OFFICE (NEWBURY PARK)
7. DINING ROOM
8. KITCHEN
9. STORE ROOM
10. MILK ROOM

(14 ROOMS)

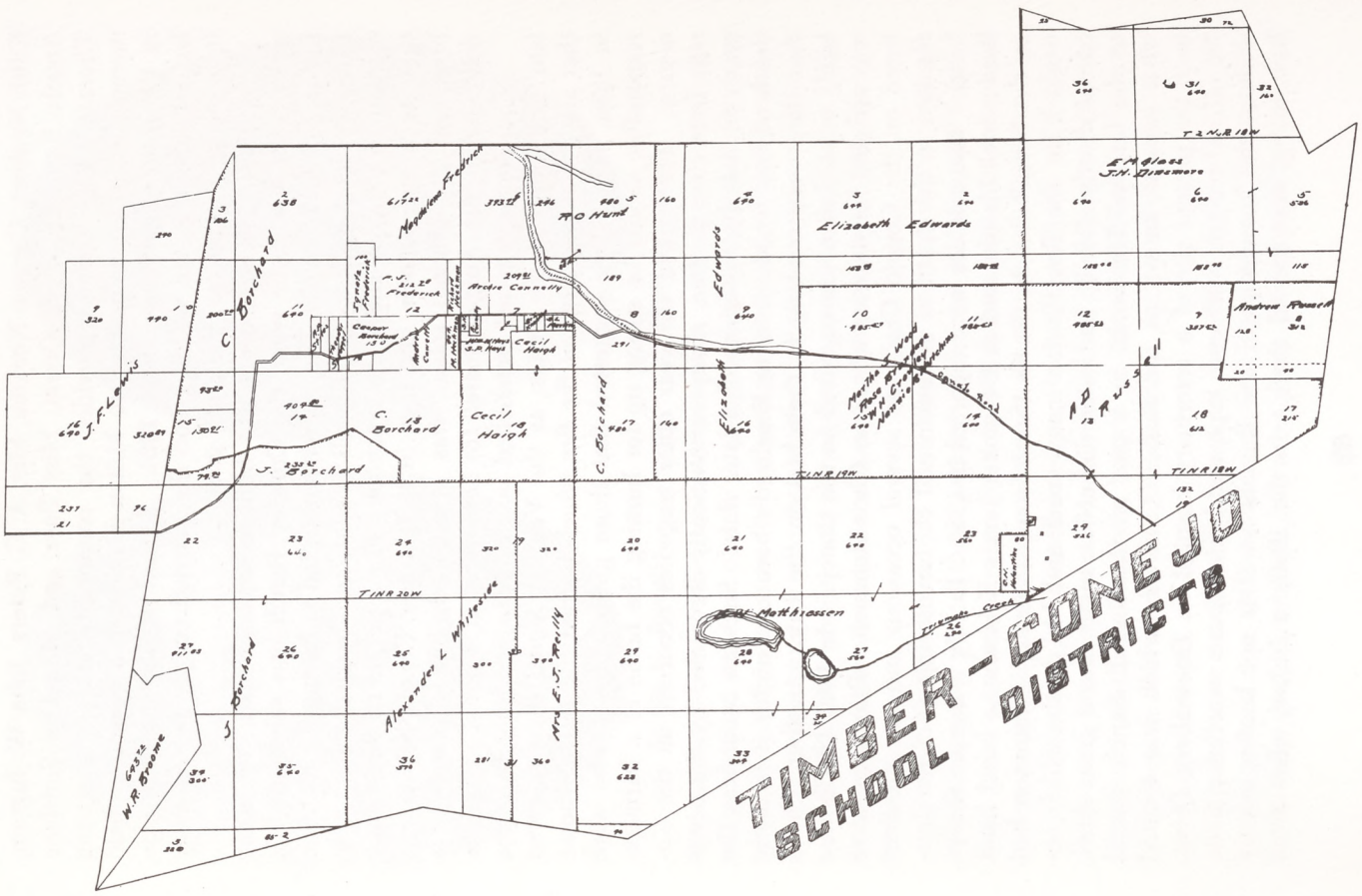
(9 BED ROOMS)

5,960 acres of his original property was sold to A. D. and H. M. Russell for $15,000 in 1880. The Russells had migrated from Canada in the 1870's, settling on a sheep ranch on the Los Alamos Rancho near Mission La Purisima. It was not possible to take a wagon to their home in the hills there; and Abagail Russell, who had never ridden horseback, hardly appreciated the effort it took to reach the ranch. No doubt she enjoyed living in the beautiful flat which later became known as the Russell Valley.

Abigail Russell became champion of the cause to keep the Triunfo School in the Conejo School District by suppling it with enough students to keep open. She encouraged her husband to hire only ranch hands who were married and had families; and it is said that she sometimes boarded children in order to keep the quota high enough. The 1939 Conejo School *Annual* quotes Almon Whiteside who started school one year in advance of the usual time in order to have enough students. He told the interviewer that on one occasion Mrs. Russell surprised the family by returning home in the spring wagon with three negro children to add to the enrollment. The students brought home by Mrs. Russell were probably the children of Mr. and Mrs. John Ballard, who lived in Triunfo Canyon. Mrs. Ballard had been a house slave and she sometimes assisted Mrs. Russell when the children were ill.

The location of the school would now be to the west of the Mexican restaurant in Westlake Village called Cisco's. The little school building seems to have had two rooms at times, one having been used by the teacher for a residence. Most of the time, however, she lived with the Russell family. Small wonder it was referred to as Russell School. The school was built on skids, but there is no evidence to indicate that it ever required moving. A well was nearby and a large oak tree provided shade for the children. From the school one could see far up into Lakeview Canyon and probably for that reason it came to be Schoolhouse Canyon. The paralleling canyon through which Westlake Boulevard now runs to North Ranch was the accepted route to Simi Valley; and it was named Skelton Canyon for James I. Skelton, whose ranch was in that area.

Janet Scott Cameron in *Simi grows up* says that her mother taught in that little white school house and boarded with the Russells. Another of the young ladies was Miss Philbrook who was a graduate of an Illinois Normal School. Other known teachers were Miss Anderson, Miss Sarah Barker, Miss Lizzie McMillan, Miss


T.2 N.,R.18 W.
T.1 N.,R.18 W.
T.1 N.,R.19 W.
T.1 N.,R.20 W.
C. Borchard
Hawthorne Frostrich
A.O. Hunt
Elizabeth Edwards
E.M. Glass
J.N. Dinsmore
Ardis Connelly
Cecil Haigh
Andrew Powell
Martha L. Wood
Rose Strawberry
Mary Jackson
Branch Road
J. F. Lewis
J. Borchard
Alexander L. Matheson
Mrs. E.J. Merrill
W.R. Broome
Matheson
Timmon Creek
TIMBER - CONEJO
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Edith Neukom, Carmen Neukom, Mrs. A. G. Peters, John W. Ingram, Angela Ferguson, Ruth Quinn, Miss Baer and Miss Ola Sunshine Thomas. Miss Thomas provided the community with a charming memory for she was married to Milton Havens in a ceremony held in the little schoolhouse about 1924. Several of her students were her attendants in the wedding and the married couple putted away in a Model-T Ford car, the story goes.

In 1924 a second school was built to accommodate the influx of students who came when the Crowley Ranch was subdivided in the area of 'Old Town'. Their parents objected to having the children make the long walk to the Russell School, and banded together to convert an old cook shack into a school. For a period of three years there were two schools, and then in 1930 a new Conejo School was built and the original school was abandoned; but a plaque was dedicated to Mrs. Abigail Russell for her efforts. It is dated 1877-1929.

The Conejo was not untouched by problems resulting from the late War Between the States, as the Ventura *Signal* duly reported that arson was suspected in the fire which burned the Ballard home in 1889. The editor suggested that those guilty culprits who were responsible should be strung up for burning the home of a harmless negroe. Throughout the year other tragedies occurred on the Conejo from time to time, always conveniently chronicled by the newspaper for use by historians of a later date. Such an event was the death of two woodcutters in Borchard's barn one night; it is likely that they were smoking in their bed on the hay. Another time a badly wanted man was captured on the Conejo. In 1886 Ah Charley was arrested for drawing a gun on Chris Reinman. Runaways were listed on the Conejo Grade on several occasions and one accident resulted in the death of a woman and the severe injury of her husband. Two suicides were reported in 1884. In July a Basque sheepherder took his life; and in December James Robinson, a hired hand on the Russell Ranch, slit his throat from ear to ear. Robinson had worked for the Russells for many years and his death, which occurred shortly after he had eaten dinner one night, was a great shock to the family. His burial in a plot on the Russell Ranch started what became known as the Russell Cemetery which was located near the present site of a veterinary hospital on Duesenberg Drive. No official records were ever kept, and burials were sometimes made without the knowledge of the Russells so it is not known exactly how many were buried there. In the 1940's a history class from

Joseph H. Russell

Henrietta Russell

the University of Southern California made a study of cemeteries within driving distance of Los Angeles, and they recorded for posterity a list of the names on the remaining tombstones. Unfortunately, by this time many of the headstones had been taken or broken by vandals. The bodies have since been removed to the Valley Oaks Cemetery, and are located in a special enclosure named the Pioneer Cemetery.

Joseph H. Russell and his three brothers and two sisters were all born during the period their parents resided on the Triunfo Ranch. Their father, Andrew Durkee Russell, was known as a just man; and he was frequently called upon to make decisions for neighbors who were in dispute. Joe Russell lived on the ranch with his wife, Henrietta, until his death in 1964; he was also a leader in community affairs and was affectionately known as 'Mr. Republican'. In two interesting books on his life he describes early events concerning ranching in the area.

At the time the Russells moved to the Mills' ranch in 1881 the Newbury Park Post Office was located at the home of Jonathon P. Cutler who had purchased 320 acres from Mills in 1876. On the

Neighborhood roundup

same day Mr. Mills purchased a piece of land from J. P. and Mary Cutler, which was located at California and Main Streets in Ventura. It appears to have been a trade as the price on both pieces of property was $500. Mr. Cutler took the post office and stage station over when Mills left the area. The year following the purchase by the Russells the boundary between Los Angeles and Ventura Counties was resurveyed. The line was changed, and it placed the Cutler home and Newbury Park Post Office in Los Angeles County.

In 1884 Mr. and Mrs. Ignatz Philbrook and their large family moved to the Russell Ranch from Simi, and built a new two-story building which was then used for the stage stop and post office. It was located at Triunfo Corners, or what is now a site near the intersection of Westlake Boulveard and the Ventura Freeway. A. D. Russell persuaded the Supervisors of Los Angeles County to allaw him to change the location of the Los Angeles road from the approximate location of Agoura Road to follow the contour of the hills as the freeway does today. At that time mail was being received three times each week. The Russells then moved into the Cutler home when he left the area, and used the Mills' home for a bunk house until it burned. There was also a house which was always known as the de la Guerra Adobe. Mrs. Joe Russell said it was being used as a residence when she came to the ranch as a bride. It was later a milk house since it had a spring close by; but it finally was de-

HAMMILL

HOTEL.

McMANUS & CORRIGAN, Proprietors.

THE ABOVE HOTEL IS LOCATED AT CONEJO ON THE VENTURA AND LOS ANGELES ROAD

Good accommodations for travelers, and the proprietors will spare no pains to make guests comfortable.

In connection with the Hotel, Messrs McManus & Corrigan also keep on hand a good stock of

GROCERIES. PROVISIONS.
LIQUORS. TOBACCO.
CIGARS. ETC. ETC.

Which they sell at the most reasonable rates. apr9-tf

Ventura
FREE PRESS
April 9, 1885

stroyed by persons digging around the foundation. Word had gone abroad to the effect that there was a cache of gold hidden under the house, and late in the evenings treasure hunters came in to search for it, toppling the fireplace and ruining the adobe.

Meanwhile the new postmaster of Newbury Park was Ignatz Philbrook. His stage stop was known as a family establishment, and no alcoholic beverages were served there. Anyone desiring a more lively diversion stopped off at the Vejar Station near Whizin's or at the Hammell House, as the Stage Coach Inn was sometimes called. There, at times, the action was livened up by a little gun play for the back stairway was found to be riddled with bullet holes when the building was moved to make way for the freeway in 1965.

For a time the Newbury Park Post Office was under the operation of James Skelton, but he was never appointed postmaster. The *Weekly Free press* of November 25, 1891 recorded that Mr. Skelton, Postmaster of Newbury Park, and Mr. G. W. Hepner, Postmaster of Timberville, had circulated petitions amongst their patrons. They were asked to consolidate the two post offices at the Salto ranch house at what is now Calle Yucca and Ventura Freeway. Timberville was the name given the small settlement which had grown up around the Hammell House. It boasted a blacksmith shop run by Simon Martin and a Chinese loundry. Mr. Hepner's ranch, close by, was later the Kelley ranch. The name they hoped to give the post office was Conejo, but it was found that there was another in the state of Colorado, and it was thought the similarity of the two names might cause the mail to be misdirected.

Hunt family

The patrons of Timberville Post Office apparently did not agree to the merger for it was not discontinued until 1893; but the ever-mobile Newbury Park Post Office was moved to the Hunt's Salto ranch and Richard Orville Hunt became the postmaster on November 25, 1891. Mrs. Mary Jane Hunt, the wife of the postmaster and mother of seven sons and one daughter, was prsesed into service as assistant postmaster on the occasions when her farmer husband was busy on his 900 acre ranch. Her grandson recalls with a chuckle

Post office at Calle Yucca

that the office operated at a deficit for a time; then it was noticed that Mrs. Hunt was making change with a five-dollar gold piece, which closely resembled a cent in size, in transactions calling for a penny in change. The error was quickly corrected; and Mr. Hunt remained the postmaster for eighteen years until Mr. William Knowlton took over the position in 1908. He was the proprietor of a small store in the area of Timberville. Newbury Park became a town with stable roots and an identity of its own in the year of its final relocation, 1908, after 33 years of being shuttled from place to place.

In 1915 a post office called Triunfo was opened in the Triunfo Corners building by Hubbard Russell. It remained open until about 1925. In 1923 the Star-Free press reported that the Sheik Bandits were at work in Ventura County. Three sharply dressed men driving a rented car had held up the Triunfo Post Office near the Los Angeles

Hunt Ranch

County line. They bound and gagged the postmistress, Sarah Martin, and escaped with an estimated $500 in loot. An unconfirmed story told by old-timers states that the Triunfo Post Office was finally closed down when it was discovered that the proprietors of the little grocery store operated in conjunction with the post office, were counterfeiting.

The Salto Ranch had been purchased by R. O. Hunt in 1876, and was rented out until the family came there to live about 1888. It was named for the deep ravine and creek which formed the border on the south and west sides of the ranch. The earliest maps made by the Spanish grantees show the location of the Salto, which means a precipice or jumping off place. It was appropriately named for this is the steep canyon in Wildwood Park, where many hikers have incurred injuries through falls.

Mr. Hunt was a war veteran who served with honor in many severe Indian battles in the Dakotas. The family had been one of the earliest to arrive in America from England in the 1620's. R. O. Hunt was born in Maine in 1832. The first member of the family to come to California was Colonel C. C. Hunt, a prominent resident of Santa Barbara, who had also speculated by buying property in the Conejo when it was partitioned. He was another of those men who lost their land in the great drought of 1876-77. R. O. Hunt followed his brother to Santa Barbara where he continued his craft of blacksmithing. In time he joined with Mr. Schuster who was a cabinet maker, and the two produced stalwart buggies which were much in demand.

The Salto Ranch, which was developed on the Conejo, was extensive. There were two homes, a bunk house, two barns, a silo, creamery, tack room, blacksmith shop and windmill. In addition to raising beef and dairy cattle, hogs, chickens, ducks and turkeys, there was an ingenious creamery built into the bank of the creek where over 100 pounds of butter was churned each week. The brick creamery was cooled by the creek water, enabling it to store the milk and butter. A garden produced vegetables, melons and berries; and the family orchard boasted apricots, plums, peaches, applies, nuts, pome-

granites and olives, all of which were eaten fresh, canned and dried for family consumption. The garden, orchard and 10 acres of alfalfa and field corn were irrigated by diverting the water from the ample supply in Salto Creek, now known as Conejo Creek.

One lone olive tree remains of the family orchard. It is on a five acre parcel of land left bare after the ranch was sub-divided by the Janss Corporation who had purchased it form the Lynn family. It was in this portion of the orchard that Mr. Hunt met his death as a result of a fall from the buggy in which he was standing. His son was picking peaches for guests and a rung on the ladder broke, startling the horse which took a step forward, throwing Mr. Hunt to the ground.

An interesting but little known feature of the Salto Ranch was the presence of a petrified oak tree which lay on its side near one of the bean fields at a spot which was a preferred place for the family and friends to picnic. A small portion of the tree was moved from the ranch by William Orville Hunt to his yard in Thousand Oaks. Even though a small part, it required the use of a tow truck to transport it to the new resting place because of its tremendous weight. The remainder of the tree was covered over by bulldozers as the pads were formed for new homes in the Tierra Grande section of Lynn Ranch. A geologist from California Lutheran College has estimated that the tree is 15 to 20 million years old.

Following the death of Mr. R. O. Hunt in 1918 the ranch was divided into two main sections by the numerous heirs. All of the portion lying west of Lynn Road was sold to the Lynn family who farmed it until the death of Mr. Lynn. It was then sold and the Janss Corporation gradually purchased most of the remainer of the Salto Ranch also. The Hunt ranch was occupied by family members until in 1968 when Richard E. Hunt, a great grandson of R. O. Hunt, sold his portion.

The Friedrich family ranch abutted the Hunt Ranch on the west and the creek crossing at Camino dos Rios was known as Friedrich's Crossing. Franz Joseph and Magdalena Friedrich were from Hanover, Germany. They came to Ventura County in 1882 and pur-

Casper Borchard family

chased 1200 acres. The children were Joseph F. who married Annie Borchard, Ignatz, Adolph, Frank, William, Emma Bruckner and Sisters Raphael and Clara. The Friedrich property was purchased for the Rancho Conejo Industrial Park in Newbury Park.

Silas Kelley was another early rancher of the Newbury Park area. He married Rosa Borchard, a daughter of Casper Borchard, Sr. who had acquired about 4,000 acres on the western edge of the Conejo Rancho in the 1880's. Casper married Elizabeth Haugh and their seven children were all born on the Conejo ranch. They were Leo, Rosa, Frank and Antonio who were twins, Mary, Casper Jr., Theresa and Charles. Johannes Borchard, who bought his acreage on the Conejo in the early seventies, was a brother to Casper Borchard, Sr. Their cousin, Christian Borchard, settled in the Oxnard

Johannes Borchard

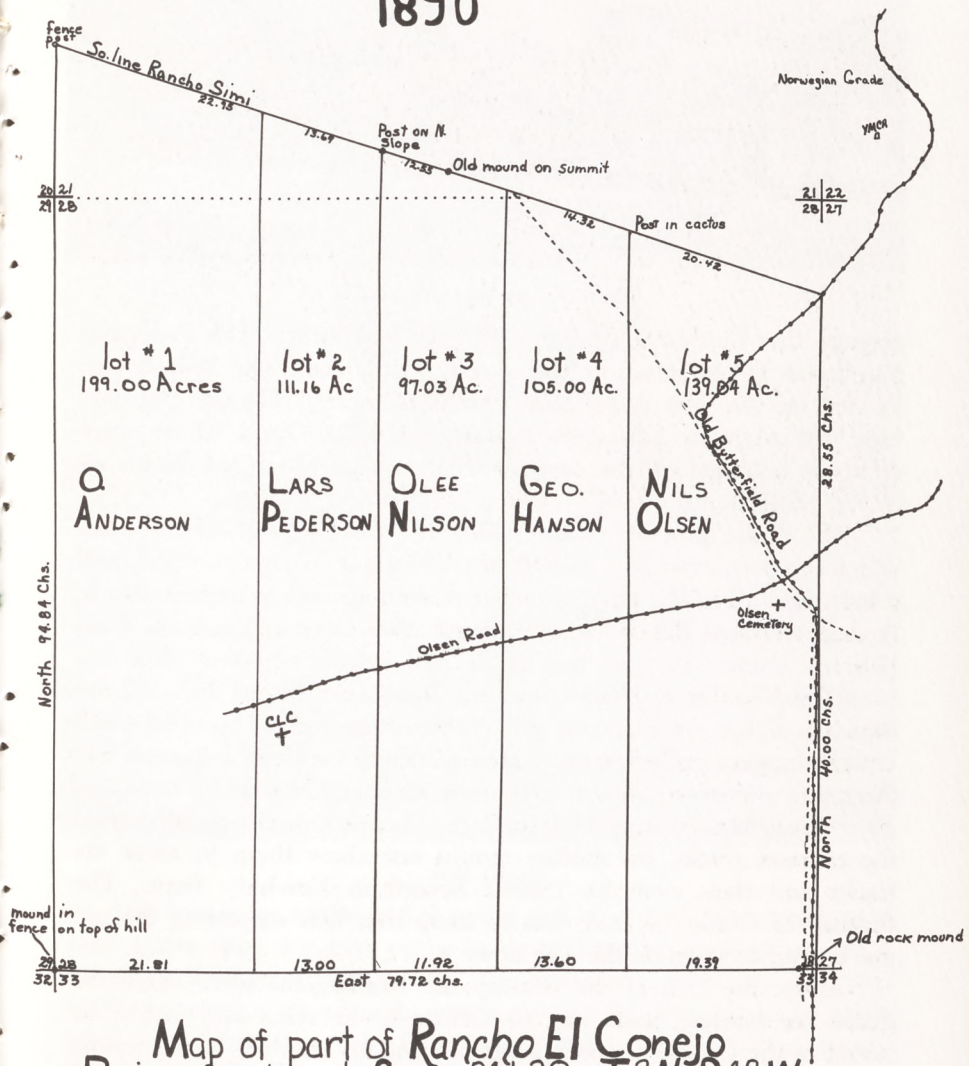
Borchard home

area. The families were all from Germany and members of the Roman Catholic Church and there are numerous descendants in the county.

The Norwegian Colony of the Conejo originated in 1890 and was located at the northern end of the valley. Four couples made up the original group who purchased land from the heirs of John Edwards. They were Mr. and Mrs. Lars Pederson, Mr. and Mrs. Ole Nilson, Mr. and Mrs. George Hansen and Mr. and Mrs. Nils Olsen. O. Anderson was a bachelor, who completed the members of the colony. At least two of the men had worked in Santa Barbara prior to their purchases; and according to family sources, it was through an acquaintance with the Edwards in the Santa Barbara Bank that they purchased their 650 acres here. The area they received included nearly all of Section 28 and a portion of Section 21 which lie along the northern boundary of Rancho El Conejo. The property runs west from oorpark Road for one mile.

Mr. Anderson received the largest part which contained 199 acres. It was later purchased by the Pedersons, and it was on this

NORWEGIAN COLONY
1890



Map of part of Rancho El Conejo
Being fractional Secs. 21 & 28 T2N R19W
Repartitioned by J.A. Barry, Surveyor.
July 1890

P.M.

Hauling hay into the Simi

acreage that California Lutheran College was built. The Pedersons purchased 111.16 acres to the east of Anderson. Ole Nilson was located on the next parcel and had 97.03 acres. George Hansen's farm was originally 105 acres; and Nils and Ellen Olsen, whose property was bounded on the east by what is now Moorpark Road, received 139.04 acres.

The Olsen property was divided by the Old Butterfield Road which ran concurrently with part of present day Moorpark Road until it branched off at the junction of what is Olsen and Moorpark Roads. It then mounted the saddle just below the Wooden Cross on CLC Hill and crossed through the saddle and steeply down the hill into Santa Rosa Valley to come out at the location of Santa Rosa School. Remains of the old road are still visible from the saddle of the hill. Pete Pederson recalls that they used to take a cart and a horse down the grade and over to the school house at Peach Hill near Moorpark. After the school was moved from the location on the bluff across the railroad tracks, his mother would not allow them to cross the tracks and they went to Timber School in Newbury Park. The Butterfield Grade, he said, was so steep that it is surprising that no one had an accident on the way down it.

About the turn of the century the Norwegians were using the grade for hauling their hay to Camarillo to sell. Hay could be raised in the Conejo without irrigation and the farmers in Camarillo were glad to be able to buy it. It was found that the Butterfield grade was too steep for the heavily loaded hay wagons to navigate safely, and a new road was built. Nils Olsen donated the land

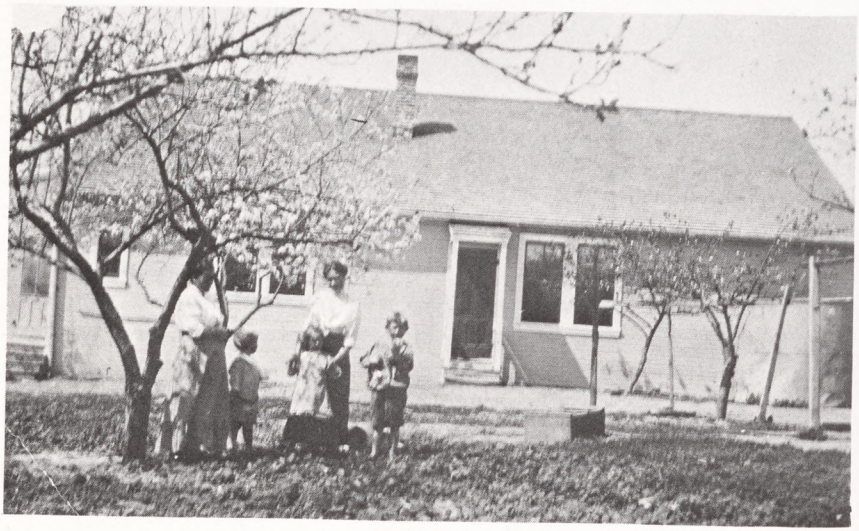
Nils Olsen

needed for a safer route; and the men and boys of the colony donated their spare time for two years to carve out the roadbed which is known as the Norwegian Grade. The county was asked for assistance and responded with enough money to pay for the dynamite badly needed to blast the rocks from the hillside. Uncle Nilson, recalls Pete, lighted the fuses on the dynamite. On one occasion he filled six holes at one blasting; and the ensuing explosion blew rocks from the north side of the hill completely across the barranca. Pete was

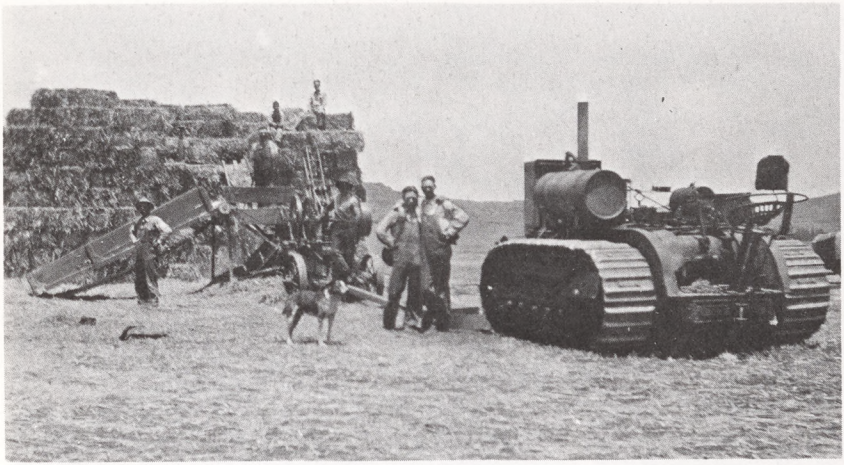
Olsens at dinner

surprised to find that Uncle Nilson survived. The hardy Norwegians used their own teams of horses and farm equipment to finish the road. It was very narrow at first so they soon went back to work and widened the whole road. One wonders when traversing the present steep Norwegian Grade how anyone ever made it across the Butterfield grade safely.

Ten children were born to Ellen and Nils Olsen on their farm, but this sturdy couple lost seven of them to an unknown disease

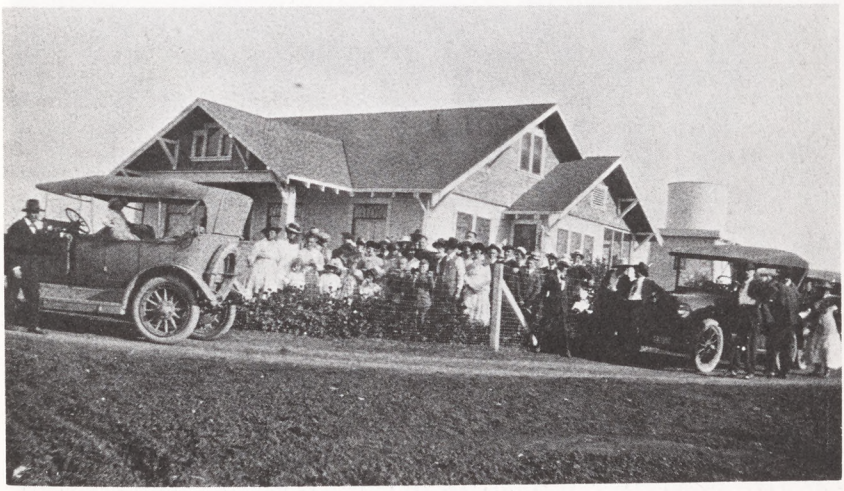


Olsen home



Pederson ranch

in a period of two or three years. They bravely buried them in a cemetery established on their farm and carried on stoically. Others of the Norwegian colony lost their lives to disease and accidents, and were buried in the Olsen Cemetery. Lars Pederson died in an epidemic; and when the family members drove their wagon and team to Moorpark to the railroad station to pick up a casket, they found relatives at the train on the same somber mission. Lars brother-in-law, Mr. Jacobsen of Moorpark, had had succumbed to



Picnic at Pedersons

Mrs. Pederson and her sons

the same ailment on the same day. A Jacobsen child also died in the epidemic. Mrs. Pederson moved back to Santa Barbara to live and rented the Conejo property until her three sons were old enough to help her with the farming. Then they could return to the Conejo! The deaths of Mr. Anderson and Mr. Hansen were fatal to the Norwegian Colony. The remaining members purchased their property. Mrs. Hansen returned to Norway with her children; and in an especially dry year the Nilsons moved to the northern part of the state. Mrs. Nilson was a sister of Lars Pederson.

The Olsen family and the Pederson family remained faithful to the land. Richard, Peder and Laurence Pederson each farmed his own piece. Their sister, Anna, married a Dr. Alberson and removed to Minnesota for a time. Peder and Laurence are still members of the Thousand Oaks community and Richard passed away only recently. It was he who honored the community by donating the land on which California Lutheran College is built. The Pederson home is still located on the campus and is being used as a music classroom.

Nicholas Olsen is the only surviving child of Nils and Ellen Olsen, and he still retains much of his land on the corner of Olsen and Moorpark Roads. His home, called Valley View, is located on top of a knoll overlooking the valley. The original version of *Wuthering Heights* was filmed in the area of the college as it resembled the moors of England. A castle was duplicated and built on the present site of the Latter Day Saints Stake on Moorpark Road. When the movie had been completed and the large company of stars, directors and workers had gone, the castle remained. The lumber in the building was used to fashion the homey farm home of Nicholas and Sarah Olsen on the hill overlooking the site where he was born.

In July of 1975 the Newbury Park post office celebrated its 100th birthday with appropriate ceremonies. It recalled to mind the important roles played by Egbert Starr Newbury and his wife, who was Frances Maria Kellogg, in the earliest development of the tiny community of Newbury Park. There is no known date when Egbert Newbury arrived in California, but he was living in Santa Barbara in 1872. In an article written for the *Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly* W. J. Sanborn says that he knew both Professor and Mrs. Newbury when they lived in Santa Barbara and that Newbury was a teacher in Santa Barbara College.[21]

The Newburys moved to their home in the Conejo in 1874 and soon he began to write articles for the Ventura newspaper. An ex-

cerpt dated June 19, 1875 says that the stage arrives at 11 a.m. each day from Los Angeles, and at 4 p.m. daily from Ventura. It added much to the comfort of Conejo residents, he remarked. Rooms were being put up at the stage office station to accommodate travelers. In July the Newbury Park Post Office petitioned for by E. S. Newbury became a reality and the residents of the Conejo no longer must ride to Ventura to pick up their mail.

About this time Mr. Woolrege of Ventura had moved to Newbury Park with his family. He was a first-class carpenter who built Saviers a very large barn on the Colonia, the largest in the county. He planned to build several in the Conejo similar to it, and would build several cottages, also. In December of the same year Mr. Shepherd, one of the editors of *The Signal*, reported that the stages were loaded every day and that they made good time although the road was "heavy" (with traffic or with adobe mud that collected on the wheels?) Travelers now take dinner at the Conejo Station where several additional rooms have been built for accommodations of parties wishing to remain overnight. Mrs. Dayton never fails to make it comfortable and pleasant. Farmers are now hard at work plowing and sewing wheat. The volunteer grain looks fine. In February of 1876 Reverend W. E. Honeyman of Santa Barbara and his family were spending some time with the family at Newbury Park and preaching for the residents. Mrs. Kellogg had come from Michigan to stay with the Newbury's, probably in expectation of the baby due in March. Their second child, George, was born on this Conejo. Two months later, the newspaper reported that Dr. Woods, Messrs. Brock, Nevins, Skeels, Barnard, Bisby, Barker, Hammell and another gentleman and their families had passed through Ventura on their way to the Conejo where they planned to spend several days in pleasure seeking. Some would probably make their homes there. All was going well in the Conejo, with crops flourishing and the wool market staying high.

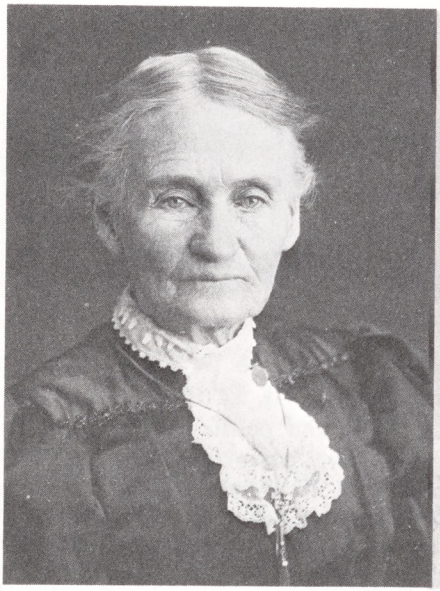
But in 1876 and 1877 disaster struck. During a period of thirty months there was scarcely six inches of rainfall. No crops could grow, there was no feed and no water for the many flocks of thousands of sheep on the Conejo and elsewhere in the county. It became necessary to kill the sheep to preserve the hides and tallow. Many starved to death despite heroic efforts to care for them. Some wealthy farmers drove large flocks to the Colorado River in hopes of saving their lives, but it was fruitless. Descendants of Mr. Newbury recall correspondence which told of building huge barges on

Crowley ranch

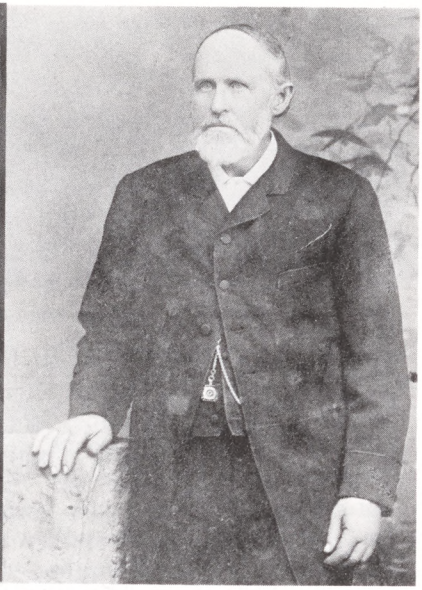
which to load the bodies and haul them out to be dumped in the ocean. A letter written by Thomas Bard to R. D. Barclay, his partner, at this time is included in *Oil, land and politics*:

> The drought is unparalled and leaves us all in a terribly disastrous condition. Most of our farmers have all their means except their lands and livestock invested in the seed in the ground; and their crops being ruined, they will have to borrow money to put in next year's crop. Three-fourths of the sheep have been killed or driven off across the desert to the Sierra Nevada Mountains where they will probably be able to survive until next winter on sage brush. Thousands have died on the way.

Newbury was no different. The delinquent tax list of 1875-76 included the name of E. S. Newbury of the Conejo Rancho as owner of ¼ interest in the C. E. Huse tract of land and 2,259 acres at Newbury Park. The first was assessed at $2,500 and the 2,259 acres was valued at $4,519. In addition improvements of $500 were listed and a wagon and harness at $80, one American horse $70, one half-breed horse $40, four Spanish horses $160, a watch $40, furniture $40, wood $30, cows $75 and machinery $30. The total value was $8,153 and was taxed at $145.53. In addition a late fee of $4.30 was charged. Later records show that Newbury had actually given the money for the taxes to a merchant in Ventura to pay but he had failed to do so. He paid the taxes and the deliquent fee for Newbury at a later date! With no crops and no sheep, Newbury was unable to make the payments on his mortgages and on the lumber he had purchased from Daly and Rogers in order to build his large barn. They demanded payment and the Bank of Ventura pressed for payment of the mortgages; and since there was no money, the bank foreclased. The property was sold at a sheriff's sale in 1878, with the Bank of Ventura buying the property for the $12,000.00 owing.



Nancy L. Crowley



Greenbury B. Crowley

It was rented by them to the Bellah family for some time and was finally sold in 1883 to Thomas Gormley for $8,500. Gormley was a single man who had lived near the Russell family when they resided at Los Alamos. He farmed the land until 1887 when he sold it to Greenbury Crowley of the Visalia area. 'Green' Crowley's first wife, Louise Downen Crowley, died in 1863 and his death certificate lists his wife as Nancy L. Crowley. It is not known if she lived on the Crowley Ranch. Crowley persuaded his son Henry

Henry Crowley

Harvestings on the Crowley Ranch

The Henry Crowleys

who was living in the area of Norwalk to come and help him farm the ranch; and within three years the complete purchase price of $25,000 was paid off. He intended to leave the ranch to his children at his death, but William Henry decided to buy his inheritance from his father in 1890. He paid $3,500 for his share, and bought out the shares of the other heirs after his father died in Burbank in 1906.

Three generations of Crowleys farmed the ranch. Greenbury, who was born in Clay county, Missouri in 1830, had lived in the area of Visalia in Tulare County for at least 18 years before purchasing the acreage in the Conejo. Henry and his wife, Laura Allen, were both born in the Visalia area. They had two children when they came to live at Newbury Park in 1887. Lena was four years old and the baby, Frank, was nine months old. They lived in one of the buildings put up by the Newburys and Lena recalled that it burned when she was a small child and another house was built.

There are still two Crowley homes at the corner of Pleasant Way and Oak View in 'Old Town'. The smaller, now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Goebel, is probably the one built when Lena was a child and may be as much as 85 years old. The large two-story home on the corner was built by Frank Crowley for his bride,

Moorpark Road and the freeway

Mae Caesy, when they were married on October 12, 1910. These two existing homes are the oldest buildings in the area. About 1922 the Frank Crowleys sold two large blocks of land for a housing development. One was developed as Greenwich Village and the other, purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Hanson of Los Angeles, was the beginning of Thousand Oaks and now referred to as 'Old Town'.

Up until this time the Conejo was always divided into ranches. Those two sales were the start of all developments in the Conejo Valley. Buses were run from Los Angeles to view the site of the newly planned town, and prospective buyers were served a lunch before their return to the city. It was not long until the new owners were busily staking out their lots in the middle of a field of barley which was planted by the tenant farmer, John Kelley, Sr. He had been promised that he would be able to harvest his crop before the new owners took possession. Mrs. Kelley, formerly Olive Elizabeth Smith who was a new bride living in a small home on the Crowley

property, recalls that the buyers planted rose bushes and grapevines in the grain, but they were destroyed when the crop was cut. Frank Crowley took a position with the California Cattleman's Association and the family left the Conejo.

The small town began to grow and a name was the next project to tackle. The developers offered a free lot to whoever could suggest an appropriate name. The prize was won by a young man attending the Conejo School and he chose the name of Thousand Oaks. A significant and far reaching event will take place in the Conejo Valley on July 4, 1976. It is the 100th birthday celebration of El Hotel Grande and it coincides with the 200th anniversary celebration of the Declaration of Independence.

The hotel which opened a century ago was built by James Hammell of Santa Barbara at a cost of $7,000. The redwood lumber from which it was constructed was shipped from the northern California mills to Hueneme, and then freighted over the steep Conejo grade by means of large wagons and multi-teams of heavy draft horses. The site chosen for this ambitious project was Timberville, a small farming community set picturesquely among the giant white oaks and beautiful live oaks trees of the lovely Conejo Valley. A number of carpenters began work in May and they worked rapidly to complete it by July 4th. The L-shaped structure measured 66 feet across each front and the two-story building reached 30 feet towards the sky.

It contained nine coal burning fireplaces and probably 18 rooms. It is difficult to know exactly for the style has been changed, and the rooms remodeled frequently during the term of many tenants. The bedrooms were tiny, with no closet and room for little more than a bed, a chest with a bowl, a pitcher of water and possibly a clothes tree. The lower floor contained a bar room, lobby, sitting room, luggage room, dining room and kitchen. The upstairs was divided into two wings of rooms; and there was a large upstairs sitting room, possibly for the ladies. A staircase connected to the upstairs hallway made for easy access to the outside. Modern conveniences consisted of a small building behind the hotel and a chamber pot under each bed. Dr. Morris was the proprietor at the time the hotel opened for business.

Mr. Hammell had probably built the hotel with the idea of having it serve as a station of the Butterfield Stage Lines which never materialized. The Coast Line Stage, which carried the daily mail to Newbury Park starting in June of 1875, was discontinued before the

Cecil Arthur Entwisle Haigh

hotel was completed. In May of 1876 a notice was inserted in the Ventura *Signal* which said that D. Rendebuck had contracted to carry the mail from Springville to Newbury Park three times each week. In the meantime all of Ventura County was paralyzed by the terrible drought which affected southern California. Business of all kinds was brought to a standstill. Mr. Hammell was unable to pay for the expenses of building and operating a hotel with little business; and his farm land was unproductive.

Valentine Harry rancher tel Home 3484
Valentine Roswell H farmer tel Home 3485
Walbridge Geo A farmer
Walbridge Harvey M farmer
Walker Jas R farmer P O Ventura
Walter Herbert D farmer P O
Walters Mrs O S rancher tel Home 3544
Ward Jas farmer
Ward Jas J farmer tel Home 3494
Whisman C L agt S P Milling Co

MOORPARK
(See Simi)

NEWBURY PARK

(Conejo Election Precinct) is 28 miles southeast from Ventura, the county seat. The principal industries are the growing of hay, beans and other farm and dairy products. P O address Newbury Park unless otherwise stated.

Conejo School District—A D Russell, Elliott Rumble trustees; Mrs J H Russell clerk, Marie L Udall teacher.

Timber School District (Conejo Election Precinct)—S L Martin, A W Hunt trustees; R Heckman clerk, Mayme Lester teacher.

Albee Paschal farmer
Borchard Casper
Borchard Casper jr
Borchard Antone
Carlisle Thos B farmer
Coberly Enoch farmer
Coberly Newton farmer
Cowley Wm H farmer tel Farmer 47
Davis Robt farmer
Haigh Cecil farmer tel Farmer 43
Hays Simon P farmer
Hays Wm W farmer
Heckman John farmer
Heckman Richd farmer
Hunt Albt Wm farmer
Hunt Richd O farmer
Kelley Silas farmer
Kenney Wm M farmer
KNOWLTON WM F, postmaster tel Farmer 4x7
Knowlton Rev Wm R
Martin Simon S farmer
Olsen Nils S farmer
Pierce Elmer farmer
Richardson Walter O farmer
Russell Andw D farmer
Russell Ed lab
Russell Harvey A farmer
Russell Hubbard S farmer
Russell Jos H farmer
Shellenberger Cyrus farmer
Smith Chas waiter
Smith C T farmer
Steele Jay farmer
Sproggel Theo farmer
Stein Wm farmer
Thompson Milan F farmer
Wadleigh Frank O farmer
Wadleigh Orville A farmer

Directory

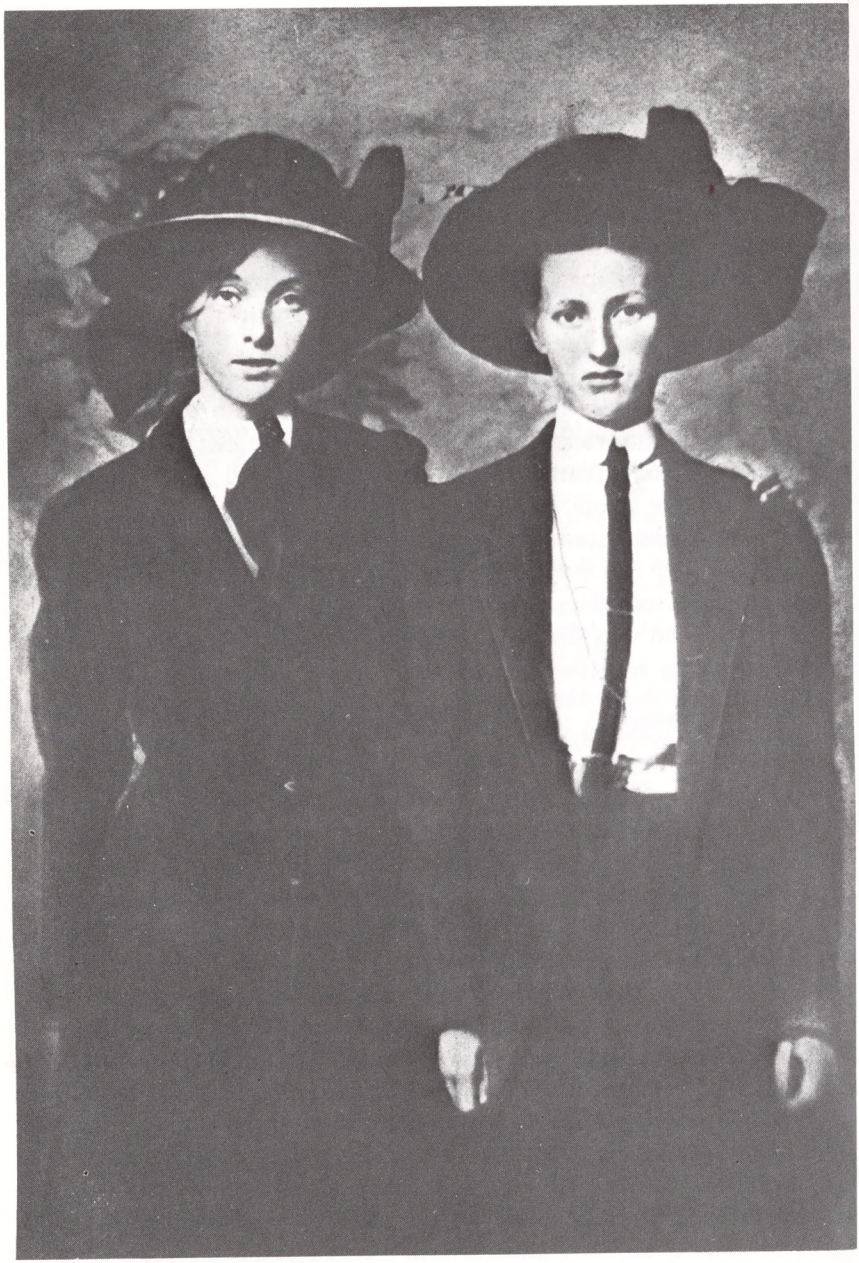
His property was sold at a sheriff's sale and was purchased by Mr. J. B. Redfield of Vallejo who sold it to Cecil Arthur Entwisle Haigh in 1885. Haigh was a native of England, but had lived in Cienega for several years before moving to the Conejo. In 1882 the hotel was operated by Mr. W. H. Jewett who was also the postmaster of what now was called the Hammell House Post Office and Stage Station. Mr. John McManus was the proprietor of the Hammell House in 1885 and in 1886 Rueben Holman was the proprietor. By 1888 the hotel was being run by M. and D. Hadsell who advertised

it as the Conejo Hotel at Timberville, all of which would lead one to believe that the Haigh's did not ever manage the hotel themselves.

Cecil returned to England for a visit; and the newspaper reported that he was much improved in health upon his return. Not too long after his return, he was joined by Cecilie Haigh whom he married in 1890. She, like himself, was a member of a prominent English family. According to family members Cecilie had always been attended by a maid until her venture into the 'wild west.' It is amazing that she was able to adapt to the rough life of a frontier community. Life in the "Big Hotel" was enlivened by the arrival of Cecilie and the subsequent birth of four children born in the hostelry over the next few years. Members of the Haigh family with their musical talents sparked many an evening of entertainment in their home. Four brothers followed Ceciile to California to make their home. They were Henry, Ronald, John and Thomas, all of whom were given the middle name of Grenfell. Sir Grenfell was the Labrador doctor who was knighted for his work among the people of that region. He was believed to have been a relative of the Haighs. One of the Haigh brothers introduced polo playing in California. Another brother, Alfred, who was the official painter to Queen Mary of Tek and King George V., remained in England.

During the years the hotel was used for church services, parties and for school. When Casper Borchard sold property to a group of Dunkards it became necessary to build an additional school in the Conejo Valley. Cecil Haigh sold five acres of land on the corner of Newbury Road and Kelley Road to the school district and the Timberville School was erected in 1888. In 1898 Hebron Bell was the proprietor of the Conejo Hotel, and during the residence of his family there invitations were issued to a double wedding for his two daughters. Lydia Bell married H. Fred Hunt and Minnie Bell married A. E. Cawelti on Sunday morning at 10 a.m. of September 19, 1897 in the Conejo Hotel at Conejo, Ventura County, California. In 1904 the hotel was remodeled into four apartments, and bulged with four families living there. Cecil had begun to sell off portions of his 1,000 acres to settlers, who were moving into the area.

One family which came to live in Timberville was a widow, Mrs. Elijah (Susan) Hays. Her husband and baby daughter and his two sisters and a sister-in-law had all perished in a raging epidemic of smallpox which they encountered in Los Angeles on their arrival from Texas. Two sons, Simon and Washington Hays, grew up in



Lorna Haigh
Anderson

Ethel Haigh
Hays

the Conejo with a Texan's love of the land and in 1902 they purchased a large piece of property from Cecil Haigh and began farming. Will Knowlton, a brother of Susan Hays, was another who purchased property from Cecil. He operated a small store near the inn and became the postmaster of Newbury Park when it made the transition from the Hunt Ranch to the south side of Ventura Highway in 1909. Simon Hays served a stint in the Cavalry in World War II and upon his return he and Ethel Haigh were married. They raised two children, Reba Hays Jeffries and H. Allen Hays.

Simon and Ethel purchased the inn and the property on which it stood following the death of Cecil, who had willed it to Cecilie. Allen Hays, in turn, inherited it from Simon after his death. When the state highway was widened in 1966 and it became necessary to move the Stage Coach Inn from the path of one of the onramps, Allen donated the building and four acres of land on which to place it to the community. Through the generosity of Allen and Dorothy Hays and the efforts of many tireless workers in the community, the Stage Coach Inn has been preserved for the benefit of all of the residents of Rancho El Conejo.

FOOTNOTES

1. Arizona south of the Gila River.
2. This is the first instance where the name Conejo appears in reference to the area.
3. Los Angeles River.
4. *Alabado sea Dios:* a hymn of praise to God.
5. A *fanega* is a Spanish measure of approximately one and a half bushels.
6. *Expediente* could mean description as well as the complete file. The map was called the *diseño.*
7. Joseph A. Thompson, O.F.M., in his book about his grandfather, *El Gran* Capitan, quotes C. H. Shinn who declared that as late as 1850 De La Guerra sold nearly $100,000 worth of cattle annually. This excellent account has information concerning the family and its extensive land-holdings.
8. Pass of Simi.
9. Bitter water.
10. John Edwards and the Sam Hill family were neighbors in the gold fields at Ione.
11. Col. William Welles Hollister was a prominent resident of the Goleta area.
12. Frances Kellogg Newberry, his wife.
13. Flora was his horse.
14. According to Thomas M. Storke in his book entitled *California editor,* Dixie W. Thompson was the colorful manager of the Arlington Hotel in Santa Barbara which was built in 1875. He was a legend in his own time.
15. Flax was raised for the seed, not the fibre.
16. Olney Whiteside was one of the men who helped lay out the boundaries of Ventura county. The 1st Township had been separated from western Santa Barbara County to form a new one in January of 1873.
17. Not only was the name of E. S. Newbury frequently printed this way, but he also wrote it both ways himself.
18. This would be the 'Long Grade' coming into Potrero Valley from the Hueneme area back of Camarillo State Hospital.
19. Conejo grade.
20. Ralph Hancock, *The fabulous boulevard,* p.179-181.
21. Santa Barbara College was a private, elementary, boarding school for children of prominent families.

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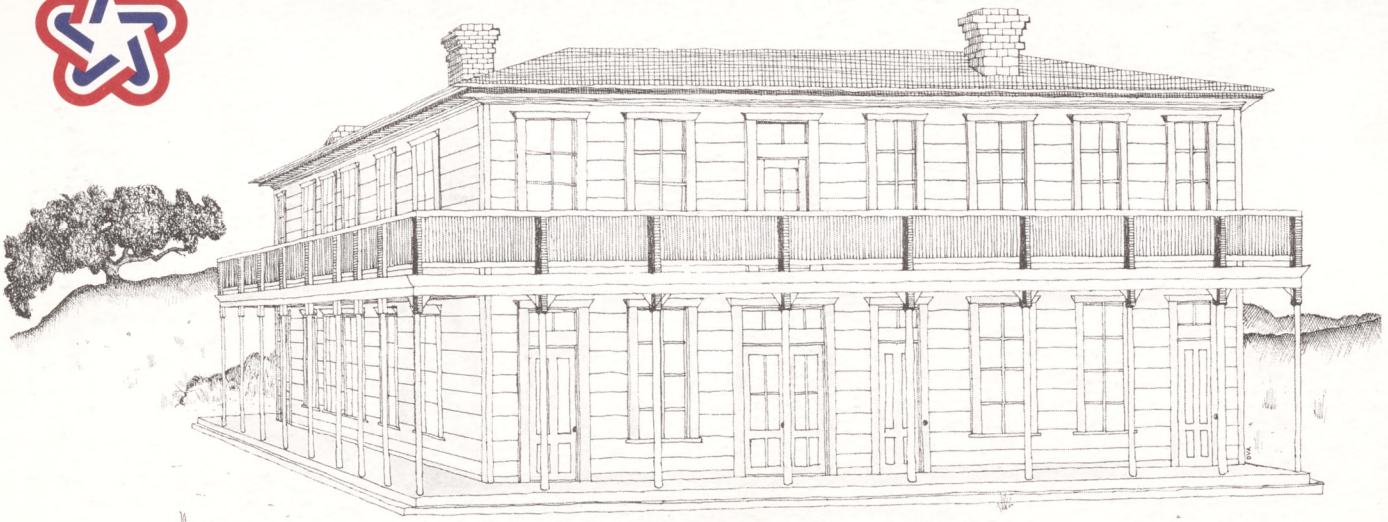

GRAND UNION HOTEL

1876-1976

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Vol. XXI, No. 4 Summer 1976

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Seven hundred fifty copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by Clark's Printing Co., Ventura, California. Additional copies are available at $1.50 each.

The Ventura County Historical Society *Quarterly*

Vol. XXI, No. 4 Summer 1976

Grant W. Heil, Editor

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THE *PADRON* OF SAN BUENAVENTURA, 1813
Translated by Mabelle B. McGuire
and
Edited by Msgr. Francis J. Weber

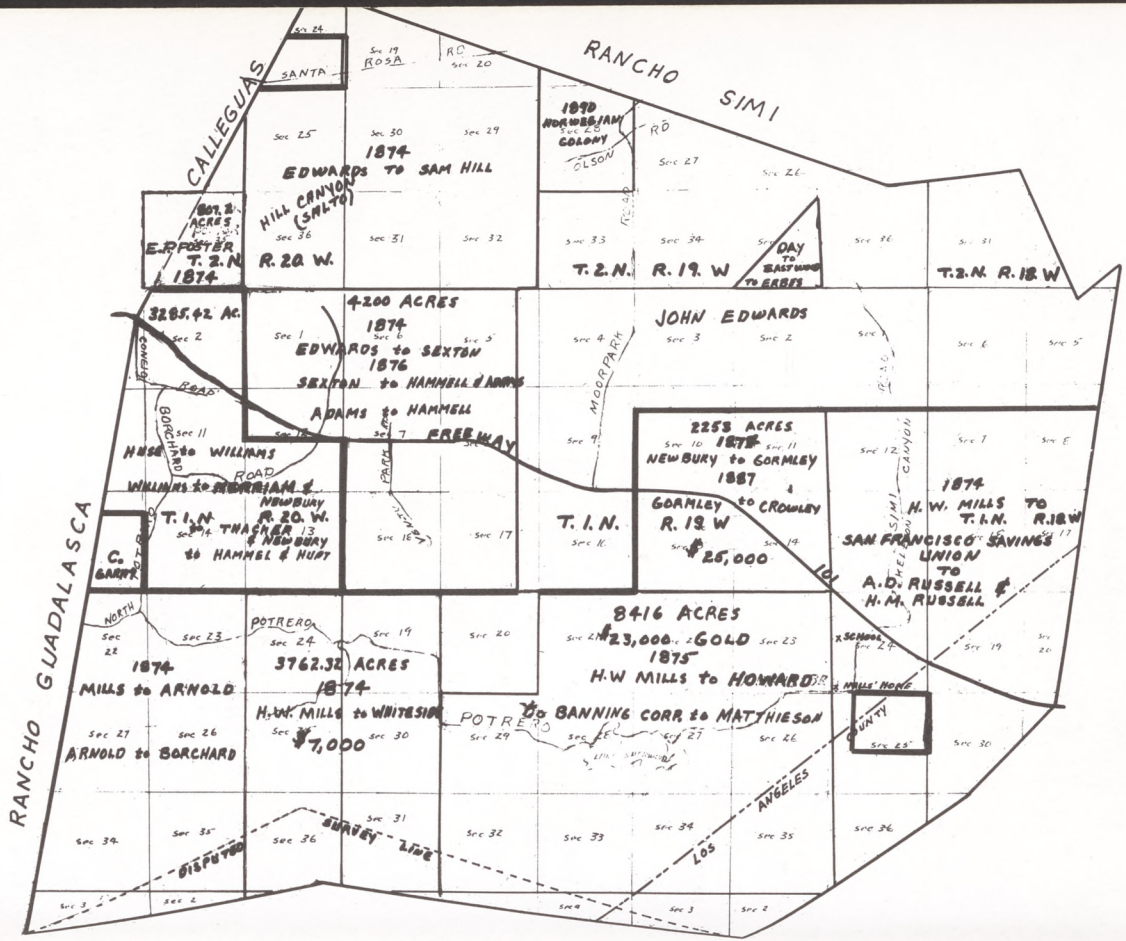
DOUBLE WEDDING IN THE CONEJO
By Patricia Allen, Dallas Cawelti Moon
and Dora Cawelti Newman

Notice

Bill Ballas redrew the Conejo maps. Msgr. Francis J. Weber, Pastor of San Buenaventura Mission, is also Archivist of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southern California. Mrs. McGuire is an instructor of Spanish and a writer in Hispanic-American history. The pictures of the Cawelti family were supplied by their descendants.

The initial letter on the cover is from one of the books in the mission library.

MAP No. I


RANCHO SIMI
CALLEGUAS
SANTA ROSA
RD
1870 NORWEGIAN COLONY
OLSON
HILL CANYON (SMLTO)
E.P. POSTER T. 2. N 1874
R. 20 W.
EDWARDS to SAM HILL
1874
4200 ACRES
1874
EDWARDS to SEXTON
1876
SEXTON to HAMMELL & ADAMS
ADAMS to HAMMELL
FREEWAY
3285.42 Ac.
HUSE to WILLIAMS
WILLIAMS to HERRIAM & NEWBURY
BORCHARD ROAD
T. 1. N R. 20. W.
THACHER & NEWBURY to HAMMEL & HUNT
C. GARRY
T. 2. N. R. 19 W
DAY TO EASTWOOD TO ERBES
T. 2. N. R. 18 W
JOHN EDWARDS
MOOR PARK
2253 ACRES
1877
NEWBURY to GORMLEY
1887
& to CROWLEY
GORMLEY R. 19 W
$25,000
T. 1. N.
1874
H. W. MILLS TO T. 1. N. R. 18 W
SAN FRANCISCO SAVINGS UNION TO A.D. RUSSELL & H.M. RUSSELL
SIMI CANYON
8416 ACRES
$23,000 GOLD
1875
H.W MILLS to HOWARD
MILLS' HOME
SCHOOL
POTRERO
NORTH
1874
MILLS to ARNOLD
ARNOLD to BORCHARD
3762.32 ACRES
1874
H.W. MILLS to WHITESIDE
$7,000
BANNING CORP to MATTHIESON
RANCHO GUADALASCA
DISPUTED
SURVEY LINE
LOS ANGELES

CONEJO LAND MAPS

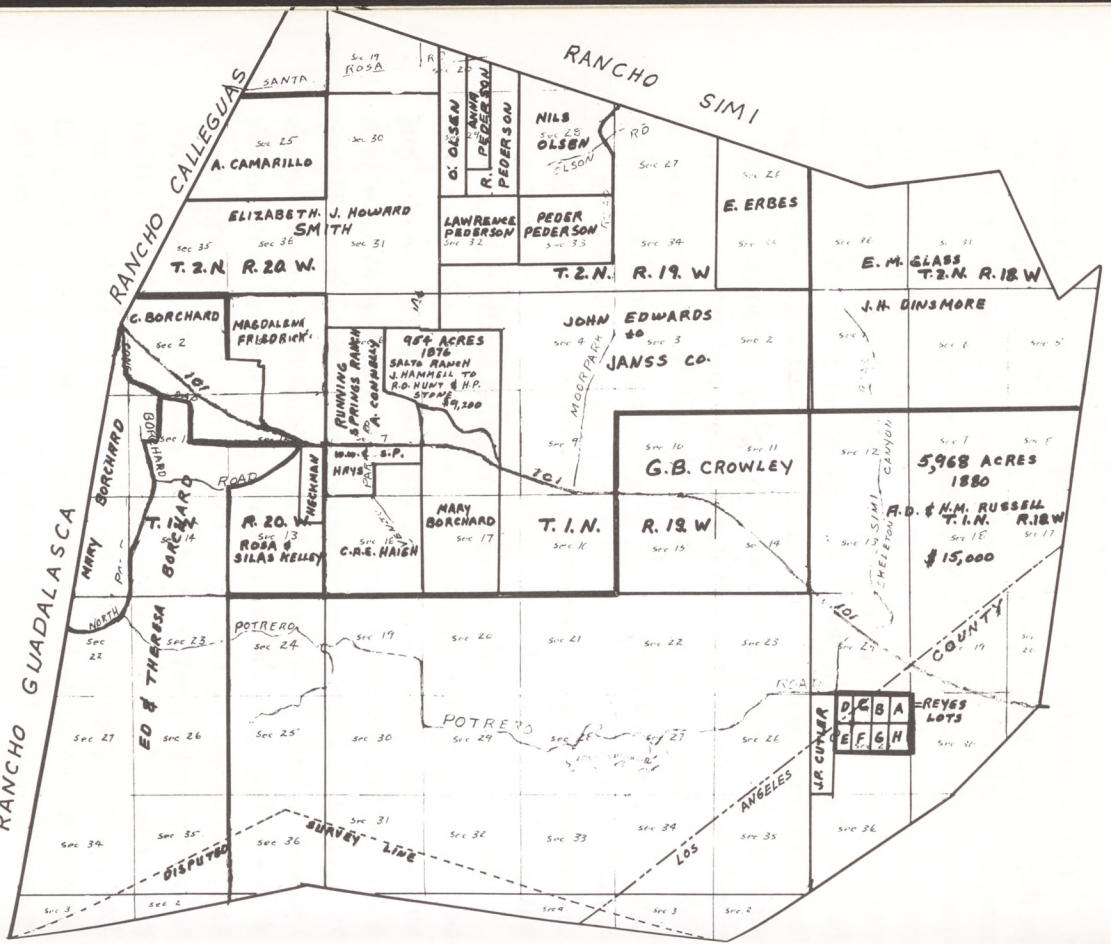
By Patricia Allen

The information on these maps of property boundaries in the Conejo supplements the history of the rancho. The ranches outlined are not necessarily in a proper time sequence. As nearly as possible the first map shows the disposition of the land soon after it was acquired by John Edwards, Howard Mills and Egbert Starr Newbury in 1874. In most cases the material was gathered from old deeds in the recorder's office, but sometimes it was necessary to depend on the memories of pioneers. The circumstances surrounding a transaction are not always understood at once, and only continuing research brings all the information to light. Many farmers sold off, or purchased additional, plots of land from time to time so the property lines shown are not always correct. The maps are only for general information for a certain period of time.

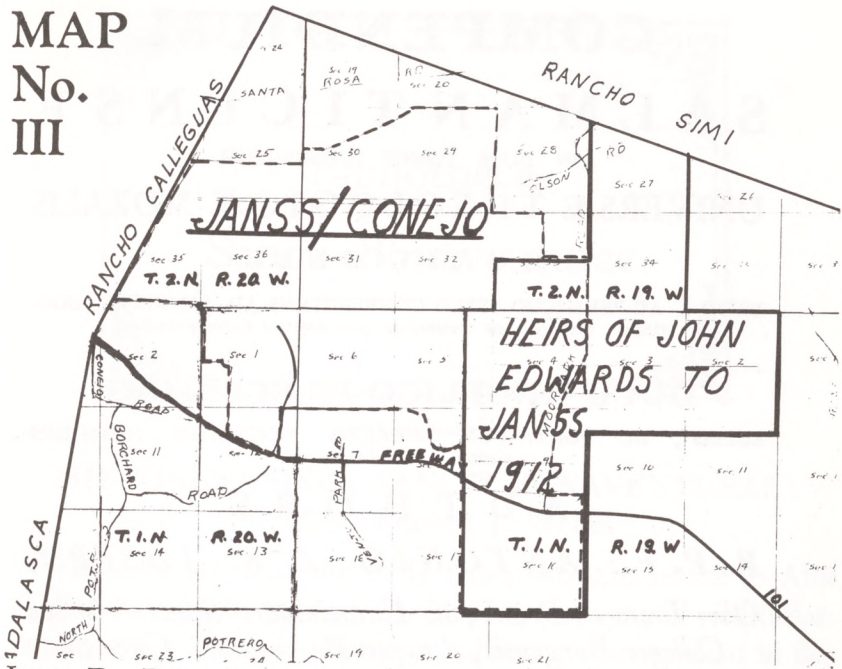
By the time of the second map the landholdings were more numerous but smaller. It is interesting to note that names of the wives were not included on the deeds; but in one particular case it was recorded that the woman in a transaction had written permission from her husband to buy a parcel of land. And their information did include details of the selling price without having to depend on the tax stamps assessed @ $1.10 per thousand. Most of the early exchanges were paid in gold coin, but many carried mortgages also. Payments were made on a yearly basis, rather than by the month. With no organized banks in the new County of Ventura, it was necessary for them to be held by individuals. These were often the men who formed the first banks in an area as the need for financial service increased.

The third map is of the different Janss holdings in the Conejo. The father of Dr. Edwin Janss, Sr. and Harold

MAP No. II


RANCHO SIMI
RANCHO CALLEGUAS
RANCHO GUADALASCA
SANTA ROSA
A. CAMARILLO
ELIZABETH SMITH
J. HOWARD
T. 2. N. R. 20. W.
T. 2. N. R. 19. W
E. M. GLASS T. 2. N. R. 18 W
O. OLSEN
ANNA PEDERSON
R. PEDERSON
NILS OLSEN
E. ERBES
LAWRENCE PEDERSON
PEDER PEDERSON
J. H. DINSMORE
C. BORCHARD
MAGDALENA FRIEDRICH
JOHN EDWARDS
JANSS CO.
RUNNING S. PRIOS RANCH
964 ACRES 1876 SALTO RANCH J. HAMMELL TO R.D. HUNT & H.P. STONE $9,200
MOORPARK
101
BORCHARD ROAD
MARY BORCHARD
HECKMAN
W.M. & S.P.
HAYS
G.B. CROWLEY
5,968 ACRES 1880
R.D. & H.M. RUSSELL
T. I. N. R. 18 W
$15,000
SIMI CANYON
SKELETON
R. 20. W.
ROSA & SILAS KELLEY
C.R.E. HAIGH
T. I. N.
R. 19 W
ED & THERESA
POTRERO
COUNTY ROAD
REYES LOTS
J.R. CUTLER
LOS ANGELES
DISPUTED SURVEY LINE

MAP No. III



Janss, Dr. Peter Janss, was the original realtor in the family. Edwin had just begun medical practice in Chicago when he was asked to take over the business so his father could go on a world cruise. Edwin never returned to his practice; he and his brother were in partnership for many years during their developments around Los Angeles. Eventually they split their holdings; Harold retained the city property while Edwin received the Conejo land. For many years it was agriculturally oriented, producing livestock, citrus, apricots and at one time, pigs. As time progressed, Edwin, Jr. was sent to take personal charge. He was responsible for purchasing more land to add to their 6,000 acres. The largest amount of property they owned in the area was 10,000 acres, which was in the 1950's. The center of it all was the Janss Conejo Thoroughbred Horse Ranch located in a beautiful setting of tremendous oak trees which grew along the barranca paralleling the old Ventura highway.

COMPENDIUM
SALMANTICENSE

IN DUOS TOMOS DISTRIBUTUM

UNIVERSÆ THEOLOGICÆ MORALIS
QUÆSTIONES

BREVI, AC PERSPICUO STYLO COMPLECTENS AD SANIOREM DOCtrinam, melioremque methodum præ antiquo cursu redactum

DUCE ANGELICO PRÆCEPTORE

BULLIS, AC PONTIFICUM DECRETIS PRÆSERTIM NOVISSIMIS auctum, & illustratum

AUTHORE

R. P. F. ANTONIO A S. JOSEPH,

Olim Lectore, Priore, ac Examinatore Synodali in suo Collegio Burgensi, denique Procuratore Generali in Romana Curia pro Carmelitarum Discalceatorum Hispanica Congregatione.

TOMUS II.

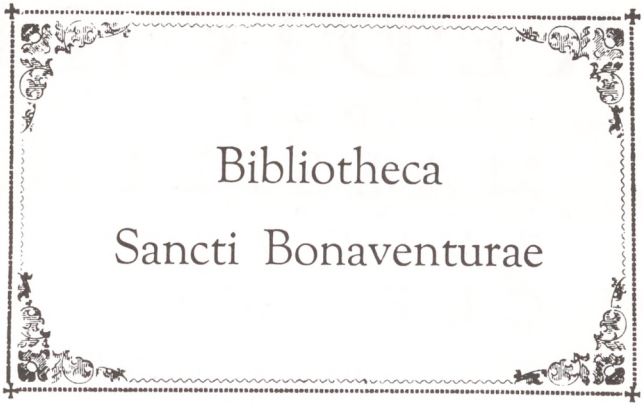
EDICTIO QUARTA.

Ab eodem Authore novissime correcta, & quibusdam additionibus scitu dignis locupletata.

SUPERIORUM PERMISSU.

Pompelone: Apud Joseph Longas, et Benedictum Cosculluela. Anno 1791.

Title page of a collection on moral theology
Latin, 1791



Bookplate

THE BIBLIOTHECA SANCTI BONAVENTURAE[1]

By Msgr. Francis J. Weber

It is known that the early friars brought books to Alta California, which were professional in nature and utilitarian in purpose. The wide range of subject matter evident in the Bibliotheca Sancti Bonaventurae emphasizes the need in provincial times for books encompassing a broad spectrum. Some of the tomes dealt with Scripture, theology and homiletics while others touched upon history, music, medicine, agriculture, geography and architecture.

San Buenaventura, founded in 1782, undoubtedly had a library from its earliest days but no documentary reference has yet been found of its existence. In 1942, 132 volumes in the mission library were counted, including more than twenty books which were used in various liturgical functions. In the latter years of the mission era the Bibliotheca appears to have been a seldom-used, autonomous collection. With the passage of the decades it gradually became more of an historical oddity than a useful source of information.

There are presently 146 tomes in the Bibliotheca Sancti Bonaventurae under ninety-five separate titles. Almost half

1. Library of Saint Bonaventure, *i.e.* San Buenaventura Mission Library.

PREDICHE

DI

M.R MASSILLON

VESCOVO

DI CLERMONT.

FU PRETE DELL'ORATORIO,

Uno dei quaranta dell'Accademia Franzeſe.

QUARESIMALE.

TOMO I.

IN VENEZIA,

APPRESSO SIMONE OCCHI.

CON LICENZA DE' SUPERIORI, E PRIVILEGIO.

MDCCLVI.

Title page of a book of sermons
Italian, 1756

MATRITI,

Ex Officina Franciſci Martinez,

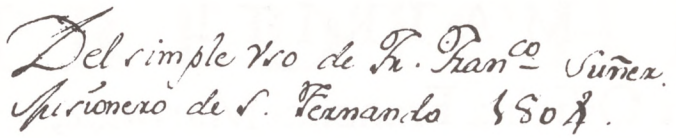
Anno cIↃ IↃc XX IX.

Colophon of the publisher,
Franciscus Martinez
1729

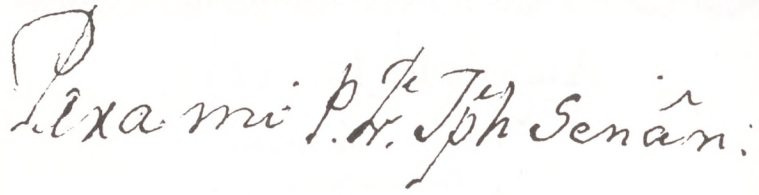
of them were printed in Spanish (45), with Latin (24) French (18) Italian (5) English (2) and Portuguese (1) following in descending order. A further breakdown reveals that 17 titles bear publication dates in the 1800's, 65 in the 1700's and seven in the 1600's. The years cannot be determined in six instances, that being due either to missing title pages or lack of imprint.

Of the titles still remaining in the Bibliotheca, 83 are bound in sheepskin or faded vellum while 63 are encased in various kinds of less durable substances. Pieces of discarded manuscripts in many of the books indicate they were rebound at an earlier date. The ornamental printing is usually executed on a superb quality of paper which often bears identifiable watermarks.

Most of the books were issued from such European cities as Madrid, Paris, Barcelona, London, Lyons and Venice. The preponderance of incomplete sets and series volumes in the Bibliotheca indicate that the largest percentage of the original books have been lost, borrowed or otherwise alienated. The oldest book in the collection was published at Madrid in 1639. Ironically, 35 of the books bear the signature of Fray Francisco Suñer (1764-1831) who was



Autograph of Fray Francisco Suñer



Autograph of Fray José Señán

blind for most of his years at San Buenaventura. Other names appearing in the volumes are Vicente de Santa Maria (1742-1806) and Buenaventura Fortuny (1774-1840).

The Bibliotheca was moved to its present glass-fronted case early in 1976 as part of San Buenaventura Mission's observance for the bicentennial of America's freedom. The books were carefully cleaned, repaired where necessary and arranged into the category system used at the Apostolic College of San Fernando in Mexico City. Each volume was individually cataloged as to author, title, publication date and place, publisher, pagination, language, size and provenance. Post mission accession marks were removed and mutilated or faded bookplates replaced.

Unfortunately, the books have suffered extensively from alienation and ill care. About half a dozen volumes were so broken and defaced that they had to be discarded altogether. A fair share of the others still exhibit physical damage of one kind or another. Yet the Bibliotheca Sancti Bonaventurae remains a unique book collection, a link to the story of another era. Its books, though long unused, shout out the details of their history with a loudness clearly recognized by those whose duty it is to keep the annals.

BIBLIOTHECA SANCTI BONAVENTURAE

totals in titles and (volumes)

PUBLICATION DATES

	n.d.	1600's	1700's	1800's	titles	vols.
vellum	4	7	43(72)		54	83
cloth	2		22(36)	17(25)	41	63
totals	6	7	65(108)	17(25)	95	146

PUBLICATION PLACES

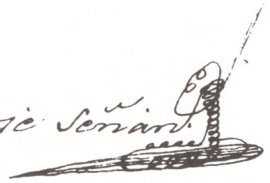
	Madrid	Barcelona	Paris	Valencia	Venice	others	titles	vols.
vellum	25(38)	3		3(5)	8(19)	15(18)	54	83
cloth	10(16)	1(4)	12(19)	1(2)		17(22)	41	63
totals	35(54)	4(7)	12(19)	4(7)	8(19)	32(40)	95	146

LANGUAGES

	French	Spanish	Latin	English	Italian	Portuguese	titles	vols.
vellum		32(46)	18(30)		4(7)		54	83
cloth	18(34)	13(18)	6(7)	2	1	1	41	63
totals	18(34)	45(64)	24(37)	2	5(8)	1	95	146

Del estado de Viudos. — — — — — — — —	004.	000.
Solteros. — — — — — — — — — —	002.	003.
Niños. — — — — — — — — — —	007.	005.
	015.	013.

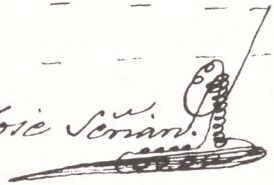
Son 28 existentes.



Fr. Josè Señan.

Nota: . . . Gentes de Razon. . . . . .

Hasta la edad inclusiva de 10 años. — — — —	007.	008.
De mas de 10 años de edad. — — — — —	004.	000.
En la Niñez. — — — — — — — — —	007.	005.
	015.	013.



Fr. Josè Señan.

.b.

Viva Jesus, Maria, y Josè.

Padron de esta Mision del Seraf.co Dor. Sn. Buenaventura en 31. de Diciembre de 1813.

Fr. Josè Señan, de 54. años, y Fr. Marcos Victoria, de 54. ambos Indios del Colegio de Sn. Fernando de Mexico.

	Hombres.	Mugeres.
Indios.		
Del estado de Casados.	348.	348.
Del estado de Viudos.	044.	042.
Solteros.	112.	139.
Niños.	078.	058.
	582.	587.
Hasta la edad inclusiva de 40. años.	302.	357.
De mas de 40. años de edad.	202.	172.
En la Niñez.	078.	058.
	582.	587.
Son 1169. existentes.		
Del estado de Viudos.	004.	000.

Translated by Mabelle B. McGuire

Praise be to Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Census of this Mission of the Seraphic[2] Doctor, Saint Bona venture, on 31 December 1813. Fray Joseph Señán of 54 years and Fray Marcus Victoria of 54 years, both individuals of the College o San Fernando of Mexico.

Indians	Men
Of the state of marriage	348
Of the state of widowhood	44
Unmarried	112
Children	78
	582
Having the age including 40 years	302
Of more than 40 years of age	202
In childhood	78
There are 1169 living	582

Gentlemen	
Of the state of marriage	5
Of the state of widowhood	1
Unmarried	2
Children	7
There are 28 living	15

Fray Joseph Senan (rubric)

Footnote: Gentlemen	
Having the age including 40 years	7
Of more than 40 years of age	1
In childhood	7
	15

Fray Joseph Senan (rubric)

2. The name Seraphic (the highest order of angels) was applied only to the Franciscans.

BUENAVENTURA, 1813

Edited by Msgr. Francis J. Weber

Praise to Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Report of this Mission dedicated to the Seraphic San Buenaventura on December 31, 1813. Drawn up by the friars José Señán and Marcos Antonio de Victoria, both attached to the Apostolic College of San Fernando in Mexico City.

Indians

Women	
348	Married couples
42	Widowed persons
139	Unmarried
58	Children
587	
357	Forty years of age and under
172	Over forty years of age
58	Children
587	There are 1169 Indians living at the Mission

Non-Indians

5	Married couples
0	Widowed couples
3	Unmarried
5	Children
13	
8	Forty years of age and under
0	Over forty years of age
5	Children
13	There are 28 non-Indians living at the Mission

Fr. José Señán

Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Bell

request your presence at the marriage of

their daughters

Lydia to H. F. Hunt

Minnie to A. E. Canelli

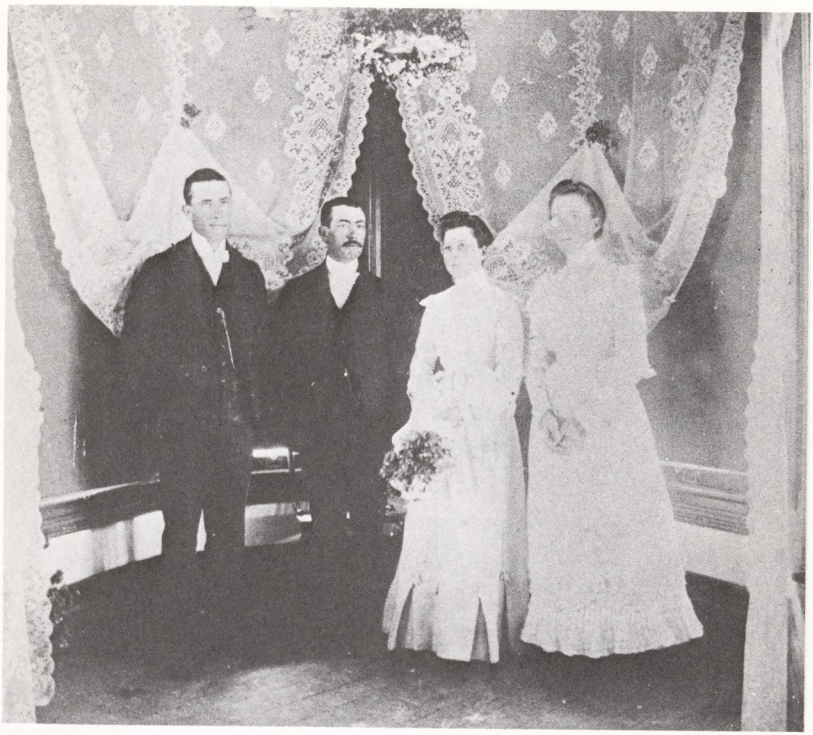
Sunday Morning, September 19th,

Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-Seven

at Ten O'clock

At Conejo Hotel,

Conejo, Ventura County, California.



Fred, Andrew, Minnie and Lydia

DOUBLE WEDDING IN THE CONEJO

By Patricia Allen, Dallas Cawelti Moon and Dora Cawelti Newman

Ralph Cawelti tells how his father, Andrew, used to ride from Springville to the Conejo to join Fred Hunt there. The two young men may have been drawn together by their common love of hunting. They started courting the Bell sisters after Minnie and Lydia would come out on the balcony of S. George's Hotel, and wave to them as they rode by. The romances resulted in a double wedding on September 19, 1897 in the inn. The invitations were to a Sunday morning ceremony at 10:00 a.m., with a reception to

follow. The Rev. T. J. Wood of the Pleasant Valley Baptist Church officiated at the simple marriage rites. While the wedding dresses and other memorabila of the wedding burned in the fire at the 'Stage Coach Inn', much is known about the participants and their descendants.

The parents of the brides, Mr. and Mrs. James Hebron Bell, were not only proprietors of the hotel from 1894 to 1898, but also sold general merchandise as well. James was a native of Maine, but he went to S. Vincent's College in Los Angeles. Mary Rose was a daughter of Remi Nadeau who owned and operated the early day Nadeau Hotel in Los Angeles. He came from Canada; but Mrs. Bell recalls living in New Hampshire, and believes she was born in Minnesota where her mother was from. She was a Frye, and said they came to San Pedro by ship.

The books of his namesake descendant are the best sources for the life of Remi Nadeau and the history of the period. He first made his fortune operating a string of freight wagons in the heyday of the borax mines; later his 34 teams carried silver from the great Cerro Gordo mine to Los Angeles. A family legend tells that he once saved the life of Tiburcio Vasquez who operated in the San Gabriel mountains; the grateful bandit instructed his men to refrain from molesting the freight wagons of Nadeau thereafter.

Mrs. Bell, a capable manager, was noted for her hospitality and the palatable meals she served. She may have learned her skills of innkeeping from her parents. Both at Newbury Park, and later at Oxnard where she and her husband operated a hotel, the menu frequently included rabbit and gamebirds killed in the vicinity. On the day of the wedding Mrs. Bell must have risen early to prepare a sumptuous dinner, complete with wedding cakes, to serve the famished wedding guests who had driven some distance in horse and buggy to the morning ceremony.

James H. Bell family Lydia is at the left, and Minnie at the right

FREE PRESS.

September 24, 1897

MONTALVO MOMENTS.

MARRIED.

HUNT—BELL—Sunday, September 19, 1897, at the home of the bride, on the Conejo, Rev. Thos. J. Wood, officiating, H. F. Hunt and Lydia Bell.

CAWELTI—BELL—Sunday, September 19, 1897, at the home of the bride, on the Conejo, Rev. Thos. J. Wood, officiating, Andrew Cawelti and Minnie Bell.

Fred Hunt of the Conejo, was married Sunday to Miss Bell of Springville, Rev. Wood performing the ceremony. I think Fred has been matrimonially inclined for some time as I have lately noticed in his demeanor a restlessness that was not characteristic. His was an amiable disposition but to have waited longer might have spoiled it and I sincerely congratulate all concerned and him, that he has gone and got married. Mr. Cawelti and a sister of Miss Bell were also married at the same time and place. May success and prosperity attend all the contracting parties.

The Nadeau grandparents of the two brides were honored guests on that exciting day. Mr. and Mrs. R. O. Hunt, whose family numbered seven boys and one girl, arrived from the Salto Ranch across the road.[3] The patriarch of of the other benedict's family, John Cawelti, had died in 1893; but the mother and eight brothers and sisters made it.

According to family tradition John's real name was Falkenstein. He was born in Württemberg, Germany; and was raised on the Cawelti farm where he took the place of a child who had been killed in a war. When his benefactor decided to come to America, John begged to come along and probably adopted the Cawelti name for a passport. He spent three months in New York where he was employed in a brickyard, then to Milwaukee and learned the butchering trade. He was to stay three years in Cincinnati where he met his wife, Katherine Sipp. She had been married before; and John Cawelti adopted her daughter, Frederica. The girl was to marry Oscar A. Stuart. Mr. and Mrs. Cawelti migrated first to Iowa and then on to California where they made their home in Springville. John was soon raising stock, later turned to farming. At his death each of his nine children inherited a ranch of 185 to 205 acres, or cash.

3. See v. 21, #3, p. 70-4 about the Hunts.

House on the home ranch, 1890
Mr. and Mrs. John Cawelti in the middle
Andrew is on the right with his sister

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Edman Cawelti

At the conclusion of the day's festivities Andrew assisted his bride into the buggy, and drove away amidst the cheers of well-wishers on a honeymoon trip of approximately 10 miles to the home place on Lewis Road. The house was burned in 1898, but a new home was built on the same foundations. He had inherited the property while he was still a minor. Andrew and Minnie Bell Cawelti celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary at the Somis Club House

Dora Bell and Ralph

in 1947. A short three years later Andrew died and Minnie joined him in 1957.

Two children were born to Minnie and Andrew: Ralph E. Cawelti and his wife still reside in the vicinity; Dora Bell went to high school in Los Angeles where she met her husband, Reg R. Newman who had been born in China of missionary parents. Their daughter, Pat Bell, married a cousin in her maternal grandmother's family.

Fred Hunt, 1892

H. Fred Hunt and his wife, Lydia, made their first home on his father's ranch where he did the blacksmithing, a trade which he had learned as a boy. The elder Hunt had manufactured carriages in Santa Barbara. Fred built and repaired the equipment needed on the 900 acre ranch. His father and brother, Bert (Albert) once owned the first combine used on the Conejo. Fred spent his spare time in many happy hours of hunting on the Salto where game was abundant. In 1900 he was instrumental in introducing Chinese pheasants to the area. He bought fertile eggs and hatched them, probably using an 'old biddy' setting hen as a surrogate mother; when the chicks grew old enough, they were released to multiply for future hunting purposes.

Lydia and Fred did not stay in the area too long before removing to Banning where he continued to work as a blacksmith. Two daughters (Evelyn and Alice) and a son (Jessie) arrived before tragedy struck in an epidemic of typhoid fever. Evelyn and Alice had a mild form of the disease; but Lydia, who was pregnant with a fourth child, was severely stricken and died. She was buried in a small hillside cemetery above Upland. The three motherless children were cared for by different family members, sometimes by relatives in Santa Barbara and often on the Salto Ranch with their grandparents. They attended Timberville School nearby when they were in Newbury Park.

The elder girl became a talented artist, using the professional name of Evelyn Nadeau. Her paintings are well known in southern California; and for many years she illustrated the *Master key,* the publication of the Southwest Museum whose director, John Harrington, was a personal friend. Evelyn raised two children, and her final years were spent on her father's ranch, Tepusquet. Alice, who was only two years old at the death of her mother, became a registered nurse. She married George Garrity, and they have lived at Tepusquet for many years. Her brother Jessie, who is now retired, is a resident of Florida where he grew oranges.

Fred Hunt, who had been born in Santa Barbara in 1876, died in 1955 at his Santa Maria ranch where he had resided for many years. Fred is remembered as a handsome man who accompanied himself on the guitar and sang in a pleasing manner. He made a striking appearance and women were attracted to him. His last wife was Mary Hays Smith, a cousin of Simon Hays and his wife, Ethel Haigh. Her parents were the owners of the old hotel when the double wedding took place.

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Mrs. Richard Bard
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Beardsley, Jr.
Nathan W. Blanchard III
Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Buis
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Conway
Dr. Samuel R. Edwards
Lloyd R. Emmert
Mr. and Mrs. Martin H. Gilbert
Evelyn and Robert Grosfield
Mrs. Charlotte K. Hails
Mr. and Mrs. Graham Q. Hutchinson
Dr. and Mrs. D. Gordon Johnston
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jue
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene C. Kimball
Dr. and Mrs. J. F. Lincoln
Mr. and Mrs. William C. Lukes
Ginger and Ed Lynch
Mr. and Mrs. James D. McCormick
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel D. Mandell
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BUSINESS

Stewart M. Angus
Atwater Realty
R. E. Barber Ford
Getty Oil Co.
KVEN Broadcasting Corp.
Lloyd Corp., Ltd.
McElhenny, Levy & Co., Inc.
The Peacocke Carpet Co.
Shell Oil Co.
Thompson, Lyders, Laing & Childers
Valley Federal Savings
Vetco Offshore Industries, Inc.
Vreeland Cadillac, Inc.
World Wide Travel

Half a Century of Service

County Stationers, Inc., 532 E. Main, Ventura. Successor to John J. MacGregor. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

Janss Corporation. The company began its first real estate development activities in 1889. Operations were moved to the Conejo Valley in 1954 with offices in Thousand Oaks and Newbury Park.

Bank of A. Levy, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception the Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

Noyes Plumbing Co., 1718 E. Main St., Ventura. Established by Bert Wigton and Joseph Noyes in 1924 in the old Hamilton Hotel Bldg., to serve Ventura County.

Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.

Safeco Title Insurance Company. Successor to Security Title Co., has been insuring title to California properties since 1920 and headquartered in Ventura since 1959.

Santa Barbara Savings and Loan Association, organized September 21, 1887, was the first savings and loan association established in the city of Ventura. The Ventura branch office was opened in June 1944 with H. R. Holst as manager and Janet Walker as assistant and later moved to its present location at 93 South Chestnut Street upon completion of the building in November 1951.

Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association. Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

Weile

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Vol. XXII, No. 1 Fall 1976

Ventura County Historical Society

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•

Richard R. Esparza, Executive Secretary

The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Ventura County Historical Museum, 77 North California Street, Ventura, California. Annual memberships for husband and wife are active ($10) and sustaining ($25), for business ($25) and student ($3); and life ($500).

The *Quarterly* is published from the Society's headquarters. The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of authors of various articles. Grant W. Heil is Editor and the Staff includes Mrs. Naydean L. Baker, Bill Ballas, Roy Eisele, Duane L. Garber, Charles H. Heil, David W. Hill, Charles D. MacGregor, Charles F. Outland, Mrs. Johanna D. Overby, Thomas A. Roe and Richard D. Willett.

Eight hundred copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by Clark's Printing Co., Ventura, California. Additional copies are available at $2.00 each.

The additional features of this issue were sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Eugene F. Percy and Richard D. Willett.

The Ventura County Historical Society *Quarterly*

Vol. XXII, No. 1 Fall 1976

Grant W. Heil, Editor

Contents

VENTURA AS I KNEW IT
By Richard Gird Percy

Notice

This issue of *The Quarterly* honors Gird Percy. Gird was a charter member of the Ventura County Historical Society, its first President and a long time member of the Board of Directors. From 1964 until his retirement in 1973 he was Secretary-Treasurer of the Society and Director of the Pioneer Museum. He now lives in the Carmel Valley with his wife.

The photographs were collated by David W. Hill. Most of the pictures are in the Ventura County Historical Museum and the History Library; three were lent by Mrs. Artie Donlon, Mrs. H. A. Powell and the David Drapeaus. John Calvin Brewster, A. L. Dingman and Park & Rogers were the photographers. The colored prints were taken by Werner Weile and Thomas Roe.

West Saticoy in the 1890's

VENTURA AS I KNEW IT

By Richard Gird Percy

As far as I know there is only one person still living in Ventura County who actually remembers when I was born. Grace Sharp Thille, who is fourteen years older than I am, often told me that she recalls that event which took place in West Saticoy on January 9th, 1889. I will have my eighty-seventh birthday this coming January. Very few people now in the county even know that there were two towns known as Saticoy: West Saticoy and Lower Saticoy. William DeForest Richards was one of the early settlers and took an active part in the separation of our township from the rest of Santa Barbara County in 1872. Mr. Richards owned a large tract of land, about 600 acres. He started the town of West Saticoy on a portion of his property. When I first knew it, there was a post office, flour mill, general merchandise store, hardware store, two churches and several residences. This was on what became known as Telephone Road[1] and Saticoy Avenue. In 1887 the railroad came to Ventura County. Mr. Richards refused to give the Southern Pacific a right of way through his property. The railroad reacted in its usual manner: their depot was built a little over a mile east, bypassing West Saticoy. A new town grew up around the station: the Charles Hotel was established by Charles Duval, and his father started a store; a large warehouse was erected on the siding by the Southern Pacific Milling Company; the Alexanders had the meat market; and as was usual in most western towns, a saloon located there also. Before long there were several homes and Daniel McKay built a blacksmith shop. Both West Saticoy and Lower Saticoy[2] were born! The name Saticoy came from the springs where the Indians of the area gathered. They had long since disappeared although the springs were still going strong when I lived in the town of West Saticoy during the 1890's. The first nine years of my life were spent there. My parents came to Ventura in the first passenger train on the branch line of the railroad which was to link Los Angeles and San Francisco along the coast. At that time it had just reached Ventura in May of 1887.

My father had been one of the original locators of the famous Tombstone mines of Arizona. These great silver mines had been discovered by Ed Schiefflin; and they were developed by Richard Gird, a mining engineer. Both men were close friends of my father for as long as he lived, and that explains my name. Father sold his claims

Lower Saticoy, 1900

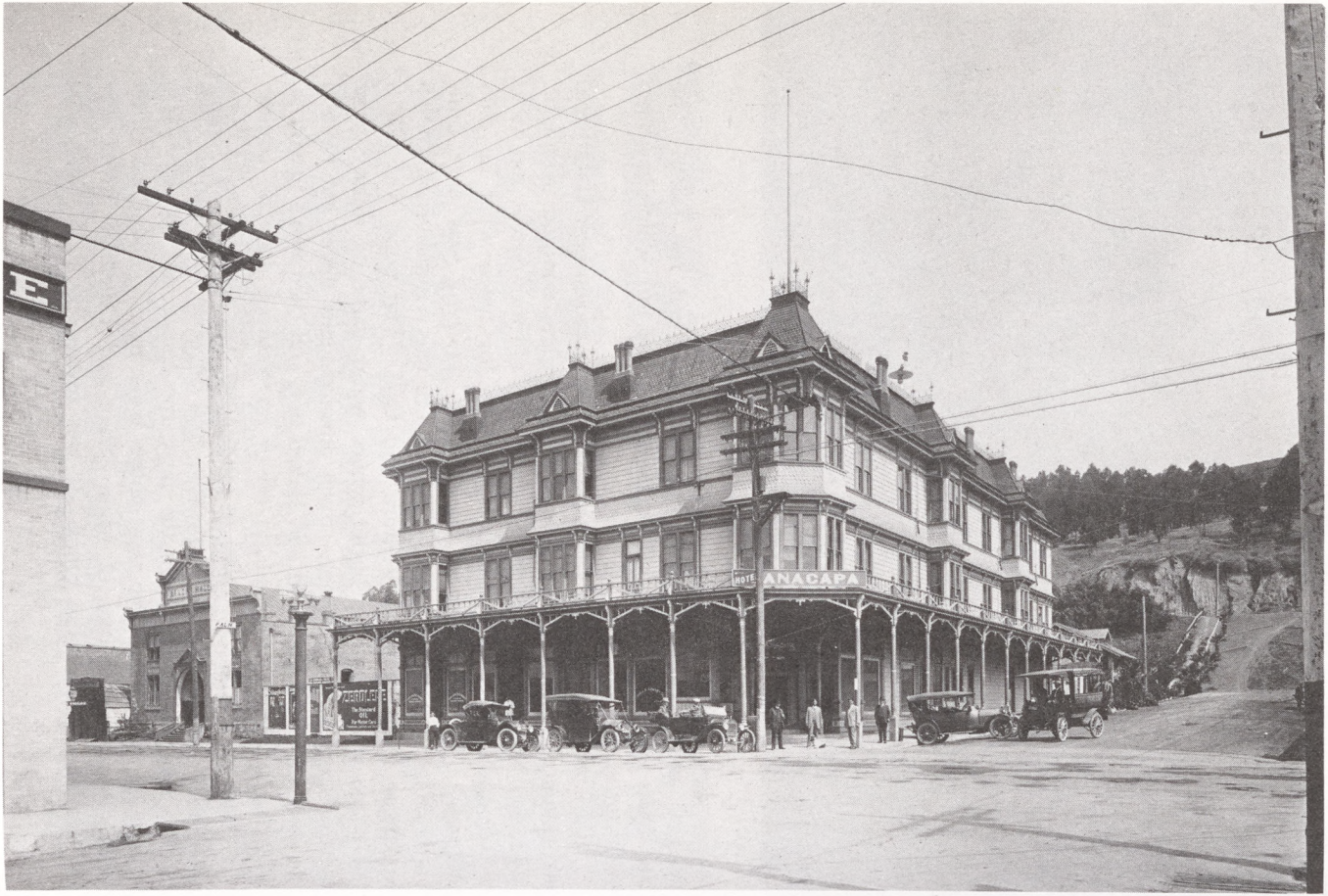
and bought a cattle ranch in the Sulphur Springs Valley along with my uncle, Hugh Percy. For those times they were wealthy men. They decided to make a trip east. In Missouri Valley, Iowa a family by the name of DeNice operated a hotel. They had two daughters, a dark eyed brunette and a blue eyed blonde. When the two brothers returned to Arizona in 1882, they brought the two DeNice girls with them although their name had now been changed to Percy. Arizona Territory was a wild frontier in the late 1870's and 1880's with the Apache raids and wars still going on and with American and Mexican outlaws (who were almost as bad as the Indians) also existing. It was quite an experience for the brides. After my two older brothers were born, Father decided that Arizona was not the proper place to raise a family. He sold the ranch and came to California and to Ventura County two years before I was born.

When they arrived in Ventura, they stayed in the Santa Clara House. From the mission west to Ventura Avenue were still the old adobe homes: the large one just west from the mission had been the home of the Sanchez family who were the original owners of the 14,000 acre Rancho Del Norte; the last one was the old Camarillo home on the corner of Ventura Avenue; and others were in between. By this time there were brick buildings on Main Street east of the

Lobby of the Rose Hotel

mission, and wooden homes scattered throughout the town. The city limits were just beyond the cemetery on the hill, which has been made into a park.

1887 was the climax of the great land boom in southern California, and speculation went wild for town lots as prices doubled overnight. My father bought four lots on the corner of California Street and Meta Street, and within a few days sold them for twice what he paid originally. It was 20 years later before anything was ever built on those lots. Another example in Ventura was a subdivision known as Mirror Lake between Ventura and Ojai. The pond was just a low place which had no outlet where water gathered during rains but dried up in the summer. Such developments never got beyond the stage of being surveyed and staked out, and then were forgotten. Nevertheless the boom had its effect on Ventura and the county. The town of Ventura doubled in population: the population of Ventura in 1887 was about 1,500 people, split between the Spanish Californians and Americans from the East; the census of 1890 gave it a population of 3,000. Two new hotels were built. The Rose Hotel on the northwest corner of Main Street and Chestnut Street was an excellent one for the times. It was owned by L. J. Rose who



Anacapa Hotel

invested heavily in Ventura real estate and built the Rose Flour Mill on Ventura Avenue and the first electric light plant as well. He also bought farm lands on the south side of the Santa Clara River. The Hartman family started another very good hotel[3] on the northwest corner of Palm and Main Streets. Other new businesses appeared along Main Street.

My father bought a 100 acre farm in West Saticoy, and that is where my sister and I were born. It was mostly orchard and had a very good farm house. Father was a lover of good horses and soon became acquainted with other horsemen of the county. He had brought his favorite saddle horse with him from Arizona. His friend, Richard Gird, sold out his interests in the Tombstone mines and bought a 40,000 acre ranch at Chino where he also raised fine horses. When Mr. Gird heard that I had been named for him, he sent Father a very fine horse named Saticoy. This was my first horse, but I was too young to ride it; when I was old enough for the horse, he was too old for me. My interest in good horses was undoubtedly inherited and began early. Al Drown of Santa Paula and later Ojai, who was one of the horsemen of the early days, used to tell people how he first met me. Horsemen who lived between Ventura and Santa Paula in the 1890's frequently arranged for Sunday races at a track on the Cummings ranch near Santa Paula. "I first met Gird," he said, "when he was three weeks old. At one of our races at the track near Santa Paula Gird's father and mother drove up from Saticoy. Gird was in his mother's arms. Gird's father drove a matched team of roan horses to a top buggy. These races were for fun, and I remember that his father unhitched his team from the buggy and put the roan horse which he had brought from Arizona in the race." I knew Mr. Drown very well in his later years, but I never heard which horse won.

A few of the other horsemen who knew my father well were Thomas Gabbert, James Mack and Oscar Willis. Tom Gabbert later served for 25 years on the Board of Supervisors of Ventura County: first, when he lived on the south side of the Santa Clara River; and later, when he lived on the north side, from the Ventura District. He also had a term in the Assembly. Jim Mack later owned a livery stable in Ventura. Oscar Willis worked for my father in his young days. Later he rented a farm on the Las Posas from the Schiappa Pietras. But primarily a horseman, Willis raised his children to be equestrians.

Sulky race at Seaside Park

All of these people, and there were many others, were men who loved good horses. In those days there was a mile race track in Ventura which later became Seaside Park. Many good races were held there, both running and trotting. One which I remember well was between two famous southern California horses, the Waldo J and Silkwood; this was a sulky race. Also for a time there was a track at Hueneme. While living at Saticoy, Father made a couple of trips to Richard Gird's Chino ranch and brought about a hundred good horses each time to Saticoy and sold them to Ventura County farmers. During these years the county was strictly agricultural and there was a big demand for good horses. However, a 100 acre fruit farm was not suitable for raising horses. Father bought a 1,000 acre ranch in the Simi, stocked it with a couple of fine stallions and good mares and sold the West Saticoy farm. Before his plans had barely started, he became ill with what in those days doctors called stomach trouble. He died in Ventura in October of 1892, at the age of 42, leaving a widow with four children: the oldest, 10; the youngest, our year and a half old sister. The horses and the ranch were sold. A 12 acre apricot orchard was acquired on Ventura Avenue as part of the deal.

Home of Judge Williams

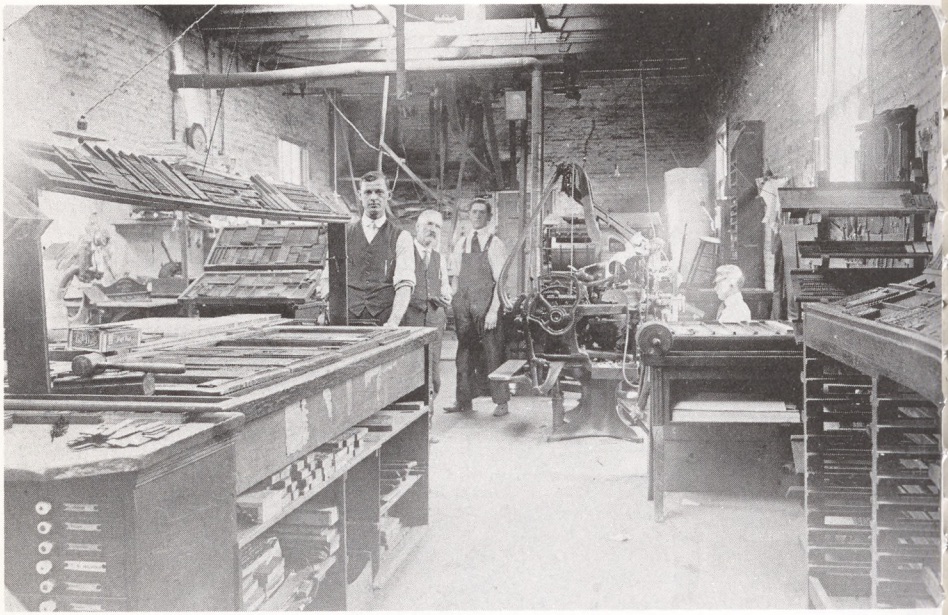
I do not know just why Mother decided to build another house at West Saticoy after Father's death, but she did so on an acre of land. The property on Ventura Avenue was rented out. One night in 1898 the new house burned to the ground. The only thing saved was Mother's piano. It was then that we moved to Ventura Avenue. The Avenue beyond the town limits was rapidly becoming a very desirable residential section with a number of nice homes: many occupied by people who had businesses in town; others by those who owned farming land. Here was the home of E. P. Foster, President of the Bank of Ventura, and of the following lawyers: Ben T. Williams, Judge of the Superior Court of Ventura for many years during the 1890's and early 1900's; Attorney Wilde; Attorneys Barnes & Selby who had been law partners in Kansas before coming to Ventura in 1887; and Orestes Orr. The Ventura County bar has since been represented by three generations of the Selby family and four generations of the Orr family. W. S. Chaffee, who started the general merchandise store in Ventura in 1862, also had his home on The Avenue. Others were H. P. Flint, T. B. Gosnell, a man by the name of Beardsley and one by the name of Stewart. All of these owned acreage in addition to their homes. The Willett family also lived there. Shortly after 1900 the following employees of the Bank

of Ventura lived on The Avenue: my brother Steve Percy; Henry Neel; Hyde Chaffee, Assistant Cashier; and Freeman Bliss.

With the coming of the railroad Ventura had changed from the original town. It now boasted of a street car line. The fare on the cars was five cents. The line started at the depot where it met the train which was a daily event. The depot was at the lower end of Kalorama Street and from Kalorama the car tracks went west to Chestnut Street, up Chestnut to Main, then west on Main to Ventura Avenue and out Ventura Avenue to Ramona Street which was the city limits. The car was drawn by two horses or two small mules, the driver being the conductor also. It had competition from the busses of the two new hotels that also met the train. There were two trains a day as the one from Los Angeles went to Santa Barbara and then returned in the afternoon, stopping at Ventura both times; also at Saticoy, Santa Paula and Fillmore. After the coming of the Southern Pacific there was much talk of other railroads, even electric lines, along the Malibu coast and across the mountains to the San Joaquin Valley. However nothing developed but that until 1898. The branch line to Nordhoff was opened and about the same time the coast line from San Luis Obispo was finally completed. With the construction of the sugar factory a branch line was built across the Santa Clara River to Oxnard.

During the 1890's Ventura had expanded to the east. There were now business buildings on both sides of Main Street from Ventura Avenue to California Street, many of them built of brick. Between California and Chestnut Streets were the Day building on the east corner of California and another two-story brick building, the upper floor used for the Odd Fellows Lodge. That was practically the end of the business district in 1900. Halfway between California and Chestnut Street on the south side was a large Moreton Bay fig tree (called by most people a Rubber Tree) almost as large as the one still standing in the corner of the Plaza, and a small house sitting back under the tree. On the present site of the library were the Theodosia Sheperd gardens which had many rare plants and flowers. She became known widely throughout the country for her nursery and the new plants which she propagated, particularly the beautiful double petunias. Her husband was one of the town's lawyers. Next to the Rose Hotel on the opposite corner was the brick home of Mrs. Green B. Taylor, the owner of the 8,888 acre Taylor Ranch on the west side of the Ventura River. Taylor had purchased the ranch

Northside of Main St. at California
Free Press, Mrs. Taylor and the Rose Hotel to the right



Free Press

from the Rodriguez family for $8,000, and paid for it in gold. He had come to the village of Ventura with wagons and teams, with the gold in two empty whiskey barrels in his wagon. Between the Taylor house and the corner of California Street were several smaller frame buildings. In one was the *Ventura Free Press* later published by D. J. Reese as a Republican paper. The *Democrat* was published by John McGonigle. In those days most towns had two newspapers, each supporting one political party.

The City Hall and Library were on the northwest corner of Main and California Streets, the Library upstairs. In front of the building against the curb was a watering trough for horses. I have heard that once there was a tall marble statue of an angel above the trough. It definitely was not there in 1903. In that year I was given a citation by the marshal for riding my bicycle on the wooden sidewalk along Ventura Avenue inside the town limits. Leachman Lewis was the Mayor and I was supposed to appear at his office the next day. I conveniently forgot about it. The mayor's son, Ruel Lewis, and I were both in high school and did our chemistry experiments together. A few days later Ruel told me, "Dad says that you had

Schiappa Pietra home

better show up at his office, and be sure that you do." With visions of being put in jail, I stopped at the mayor's office that afternoon. I did not even get a scolding. Mr. Lewis just told me not to do it again.

During the latter part of the 1880's and during the 1890's many homes were built in Ventura. One of the finest was the Schiappa Pietra home on the northeast corner of Santa Clara and Figueroa Streets. It took in a quarter of a block with the well landscaped grounds. During the 1860's these two Italian brothers had secured the 14,000 acre Rancho Del Norte from the Sanchez heirs. No expense was spared on this beautiful house with imported marble stairways and interior decorations of the finest. Another was the home of the Juan Camarillo family on California Street between Main and Poli on the east side of the street. The elder Camarillo was the owner of the 10,000 acre Calleguas Rancho which he had acquired from the original grantee, the Ruiz family. Although there were many other very nice homes built during this time, none could compare with these two. Most of them were built on Poli, Main and

Ventura County Hospital on Meta St.

Santa Clara Streets, east of the business section. The Courthouse, Jail and County Hospital were on the Santa Clara Street in a half block beyond Figueroa Street. Fronting on Figueroa Street were the attractive homes of Nick Peirano on the southwest corner of Santa Clara, and of the Solari family on the corner of Meta Street. Agostino Solari had been a silent partner of the Schiappa Pietra brothers; this did not become known until the settlement of the estate in the early 1900's.

Until the coming of the railroad the only connection of the town with the outside world had been by the stage lines or coastal ships which plied the ocean between San Francisco and southern California. After 1864 the ranches began to be broken up and sold to farmers. In 1868 John Borchard planted the first crop of barley on the south side of the Santa Clara River on land sold to him by Thomas R. Bard. Hueneme became the second town in the county after Bard built the first wharf there in 1871, a year ahead of the one at Ventura.

Rear of the County Jail

Ship aground!

There was not a good harbor at either place, only roadsteads open to the sea. Storms made both places dangerous for shipping at times. Three of Ventura's streets are named for ships which were wrecked on the coast of the town: Crimea, Ann for the ship *Lucy Ann* and Kalorama. In later years the *Coos Bay* went ashore at the foot of Figueroa Street, but was saved only to become a complete wreck about 1920 during an extremely heavy storm. Even after the coming of the railroad ships continued to bring lumber from the north to Ventura and unload at the wharf. Cargoes of farm produce were shipped to San Francisco by ships on their return. For years there were large storage warehouses at the shore end of the Ventura wharf. The first oil tanker, the *W. L. Hardison,* burned at the Ventura wharf in late 1889. It was built by Hardison & Stewart of Santa Paula. In connection with Thomas Bard the Union Oil Company was formed at Santa Paula October 17, 1890. The company already had a four-inch oil line from its wells to tidewater, and Ventura ended up an oil shipping terminal.

For many years Ventura was hemmed in on the east and the west by ranches, and by the ocean on the south with no way to expand except on Ventura Avenue. On the west was the Ventura River, and on the east was the 2,400 acre Dixie Thompson Ranch. This ranch was the west half of the San Miguelito Grant made in 1840 to Raimundo Olivas and Felipe Lorenzana. Thompson had bought the half owned by Lorenzana. Dixie Thompson was a Santa Barbara man and never lived on the ranch. He had other property in the Santa Barbara area and for a number of years was manager of the Arlington, a famous tourist hotel of that city. The Ventura ranch was under the management of a superintendent who was a relative of the owner. In earlier days it had been planted to barley, but later was planted to limas and was claimed to be the biggest bean ranch in the world. During the late 1800's and early 1900's lima beans were one of the principal crops grown in the county. The Thompson ranch started at the east limits of the original Ventura which was the Sanjon Barranca. Sanjon is a corruption of the Spanish word for a ditch, *zanja.* There were many such corruptions of the Spanish by the early Americans, and the original barranca was definitly a big ditch. The name still stands on one of our streets. The angle between what became East Main Street and Thompson Boulevard was a part of the Thompson property. It was bounded on the south by the sea high tide line, and on the east by the Olivas property.

Parade of the U.S. Forest Rangers past the booths on Main Street

A feature of Ventura's past which few recall were the street fairs at the turn of the century. There were three that I remember: 1900, 1901 and 1902. The fairs were sponsored by the merchants on Main Street, many of whom built fancy decorated booths in front of their stores; and Main Street was decorated with bunting. It was a gala time for the town and community with parades and entertainment. A queen and her court consisting of a prime minister, ladies-in-waiting, knights and two pages were dressed in ornate costumes. A beautiful young lady was chosen queen: in 1900 it was Miss Helen McCoy; 1901, Miss Bertha Roth; and 1902, Miss Maud Crothers. A

Queen's throne in north Oak St.

platform was built in Oak Street on the north side of Main Street for the queen's throne and seats for her court on either side, with ladies-in-waiting on one side and gentlemen-in-waiting on the opposite side. The two pages sat just below the queen. Here the court viewed the parades and other entertainment. The festivities lasted for three days with them in attendance in the afternoon and some evenings. It was a colorful affair when they put in their appearance. The members of the court were already present when the queen and prime minister arrived in a shiny barouche[4] drawn by two beautiful horses with her two pages on shetland ponies in the lead. This was the Fair of 1902. The pages were dressed in velvet costumes and with long brown curls (wigs of course) and truthfully looked more like two pretty girls than like boys. I was one of them, and Harry Brown the other. We were each 13 years old. We followed the queen and prime minister as they went upon the platform and to her throne, and then we sat just below her. During the 1902 Fair there was a midway on California Street with side shows, etc. The queen and her court visited it one evening. There among other sights we saw Bosco the Snake Eater, a hairy looking creature in a den of crawling snakes, and Little Egypt. The originals of these had become popular in the Chicago World Fair. Bosco was disgusting. Little Egypt was a woman in skin colored tights with butterflies and other small colored objects painted on her tights. In 1902 that was considered a very risqué show. There were others of the usual carnival type. As far as I remember the 1902 was the last of the street fairs in Ventura. Ventura had a theater in the early 1900's on Santa Clara Street between Oak and California. Vaudeville and other shows were booked out of Los Angeles. I remember seeing *East Lynne* and other popular productions. Sousa's band and several prominent singers of those days also appeared here. Minstrel shows were occasionally staged by local talent. It was several years after 1900 before Ventura had a moving picture show; when they did begin to appear, they were very amateurish affairs.

The first residences in Ventura were built by the Californians and were made of adobe bricks and tile principally along what became the Main Street, west of the mission. The only one left in Ventura today is the Ortega Adobe at the west end of Main Street. This house was built by Ramon Ortega in 1857. Near the Ortega adobe was also the Dubbers' adobe house. One adobe house undoubtedly pre-dated the Ortega house by quite a few years.[5] Some adobes

Tico Adobe

The Avenue

were still there for several years after 1900, gradually giving way as new buildings replaced them. West of Ventura Avenue in the early 1900's and up the valley as far as the city limits at Ramona Street were scattered frame homes on both sides of The Avenue. There were still a few good sized acrage plots being farmed; the largest one of about 30 acres was owned by Volney Simpson, Ventura's first postmaster. At that time there were only a very few side streets off The Avenue: Park Row and Harrison were on the west side; and Ramona on the east side.

The push to the southeast was begun even before 1900. The palm trees, some of which still stand along the streets, were planted during the 1880's, apparently about the time of the land boom. Mr. Gabbert came to Ventura in 1884, and for a time he lived on Ventura Avenue, just outside the city limits. He had a contract to sprinkle the town streets; at that time he planted the palms. Later his home was on the corner of Ann and Santa Clara Streets. Thompson died soon after 1900, and in settling the estate the ranch was put on the market. It was bought by a group of Los Angeles capitalists who subdivided it into forty-acre to a hundred-acre tracts which were sold for approximately $400 an acre. The first subdivision into lots was made by G. W. Chrisman who laid out Chrisman Avenue. He

House on south Oak St.

had bought one of the first forty-acre tracts. By 1910 another small section was put on the market north of Thompson, called Floral Park.

At the turn of the century a number of nice homes were built in Ventura. There were two of Victorian architecture on Oak Street between Santa Clara and Meta in the middle of the block on the east side: one was the home of Dr. Cunane; just who built the other is not known now. On Santa Clara Street between Chestnut and Ash on the southside was the Charles Bartlett home. The George C. Power home was between Santa Clara and Meta on the west side in the middle of the block. On the north side of Main between Fir and Ash Streets were homes of Mr. Blackburn, the Guggenheim family and Dr. Comstock,[6] later of O. P. Cook, a retired rancher. Just east of the Court House and on the north side of the street was the home of F. W. Ewing, a lawyer, later Judge of the Superior Court and still later president of the bank on the corner of Main and California. On the northeast corner of Kalorama and Main was

the Leslie Chaffee home, an attractive one-story house of a distinctly different architecture from the others mentioned.

On the southwest corner of Ventura Avenue and Main Street was the Feraud store in a large building, general merchandise and the home of Feraud's well known sourdough French bread produced in their own bakery. Across the street on the northeast corner was an adobe building which had once been the Camarillo home. In the early 1900's it was a saloon. On one side was a sign saying FIRST CHANCE SALOON; on the other side the sign read LAST CHANCE SALOON. It depended on whether a person was coming into town or leaving; either way, they were ready to serve you. Continuing along the north side of Main to the mission were a number of adobes which originally had been homes; plastered inside and out, they were used for other purposes. One was a Chinese laundry. Another prepared Spanish foods according to the old time Spanish Californian recipes. A building of importance on the south side of Main was the Santa Clara House. It was a little west of the mission, and in the days of the stages was also the stage office. The Santa Clara House was a two story building with a porch facing the street the full length of the building. Above, on the second floor, was a matching balcony. The first floor was used for the lobby, dining room, kitchen and so on. On the upper floor were the bedrooms. Between the Anacapa Hotel and the mission on the north side was the Armory Hall. The Ventura militia company in the 1890's was the original reason for the hall. The captain was A. W. Brown of Company H, and they used the hall for drilling. It was ordered into active duty when war with Spain came in 1898. Although the company never got beyond San Francisco, the casualties in camp were as heavy as if they had been in actual battle. But there were many other uses for the hall in later years. Dances were held there by the volunteer firemen, the Sons of Veterans of the Civil War and the Native Sons and Daughters of California. I well remember the roller skating rink in the hall where I learned to skate in my youthful days. During the early 1900's Chinatown was still on both sides of Figueroa between Main and Santa Clara Streets. Across from the Anacapa Hotel was another of the early brick buildings.[7] On the east side of Palm was the Chaffee store which was operated by members of the family well into the 1900's. The Ventura Department store is still in the same building although over the years it has been added on to and remodeled several times.

Company H and Armory Hall

South Oak St.

Practically all of the business buildings of the town lined Main Street. The side streets off of Main were residential in those days. Beside the store buildings there was one blacksmith shop, two livery stables and four saloons. The first bank in the town was in a brick building in the middle of the block between Palm and Oak Streets on the south side. About 1890 a new structure was built of brownstone on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. The entrance was on

Bank of Ventura

the corner, the bank on the first floor and offices on the second floor. A brick building on the opposite side of Oak Street from the bank was occupied by the Great Eastern Clothing Store which was named for the ship that laid the first Atlantic cable. Practically all of the buildings on the block between Oak and California were built in the 1890's or early 1900's. The Collins Bank was on the corner of Main and California Streets, but the present building was built at a later date and was known as the First National Bank. For some unknown reason most of the better buildings on Main Street in those early days were built on the south side of the street. Those on the north for the most part were one story buildings, and some were frame buildings instead of brick. The county's new Court House was open for business at the head of California Street in 1913 after a hot campaign by Oxnard to have it built in that town. An interesting feature of the fight was that Supervisor Gabbert and his son Ray, who was the Editor of the Oxnard newspaper, were on opposite sides.

J. M. Montgomery plows up Main St.
Collins Bank on the corner

Ventura's streets were paved about 1912, and the last of the old wooden sidewalks had been replaced by cement. The street car line had held up the street paving because of the franchise which the company still held. The rails had to come out before the streets could be paved. Only very seldom did anyone ride on the line. On a Halloween night a group gathered for some holiday fun. They were not all teen-age boys either but adults were there, also. The following morning the streetcars were seen with the waves breaking against them in the ocean. That was the end of Ventura's car line and the rails were soon taken up. An automobile race was held on Santa Clara Street to celebrate the paving of the streets. There were not many autos locally but two were entered. An even mile was measured off on the street. Fred Wadleigh of the Casitas Ranch owned a Stoddard Dayton, and John Madison of Saticoy owned an EMF, built by Studebaker if my memory is correct. John Madison had a long white beard and drove his own car. I can still see his white whiskers blowing back over his shoulders as the cars raced up the street. Two heats were run, the Stoddard Dayton winning easily. Then the Wadleigh car was driven by Bill Magby against time; he made the fast time of 60 miles per hour, a mile a minute! In 1912 that was real speed.

J. M. Montgomery plows up Main St. Collins Park on the county

Many years before the first oil well was drilled on Ventura Avenue, A. D. Barnard, an early day real estate man and rancher there, had dug a well in what became the center of the oil field. It was a shallow one, and just why he did it is not known. It had a six-inch casing, and Barnard put a sign on a post beside the well which said OIL, GAS & SALT HERE. No one paid any particular attention to it, but there definitely was gas there. A person could light a piece of paper and drop it into the casing, and for a few moments the gas would actually burn before going out. Not far from this in the river bottom was a swampy place where we kids used to work a sharp stick down for a few feet, then take the stick out and we could light the gas. E. P. Foster, who was also in charge of the company which furnished water to the town of Ventura, drilled several shallow wells in this swampy place and struck a good flow of gas. For the first time gas was piped into Ventura. It was 1914 when the first well was drilled on what was to become the Avenue oil field. It struck a heavy flow of gas, and the well got away from the drillers and blew out with a roar; it destroyed the derrick and boilers, and eventually the well. Barnard's sign was proven right.

East on Main St. to Kalorama

Originally there were seven churches. Of those only two are still standing; the mission, and a Protestant church[8] on the southwest corner of Main and Kalorama Streets. The Presbyterian church was on the northeast corner of Oak and Meta Streets, and on the opposite corner was the other Methodist church. The Congregational church was on the north side of Santa Clara Street between Chestnut and Fir in the middle of the block and the Episcopal church[9] was on the southeast corner of Santa Clara and Oak Streets. Out on Ventura Avenue within the town limits on the east side was a Seventh-Day Adventist church. Today there are a couple other churches but they were built long after. The same thing happened with the schools. The second elementary school was built at the west end of Poli Street and was known as the Hill School. It is difficult to understand why it was built upon the side of a hill. At that time there was plenty of available space down on the level land in the

Plaza School

west end of the town, and that was where the children lived. They turned into Valdez Alley leading from Main Street a short way, then climbed a stairway of probably 100 steps to reach Poli and cross the street to reach the school. This building was still in use for several years after 1900. On Ventura Avenue but outside of the city limits was the Avenue School and here I went from the fifth grade through the eighth. Another school of that period was the Plaza School where the Post Office is. This was a really pretentious building of two stories. The first high school was in the second story. The first graduation class was in 1890: one girl, Bertie Lloyd. The first high school was built during the latter part of 1890. This was a frame building of two stories and a basement in the middle of the block on East Main Street between Main and Santa Clara, with Ann on the west and Crimea on the east side. This was the high school from which I graduated in 1906. There were 10 girls and three boys in our class.

Ventura started as a small agricultural town, some might say no more than a sleepy country village. In that early period it was not uncommon to see a herd of cattle headed down Ventura Avenue and on through Meta Street to the shipping corrals a little beyond the depot. In my cattle ranching days I have driven as many as 300 head at a time on the Avenue and through town. From an old cowboy poem:

I roped a steer in Main Street here, just 20 years ago.

I did that, only it was over 50 years ago and I was 32 at the time. The steer got away at the shipping corrals and I caught up with it on the corner of Chestnut and Main just as the matineé crowd was coming out of the Ventura Theater. The 1880's had made a big change in the town of Ventura, and the homes which I have mentioned were the most outstanding one of the period of the early 1900's. The next big change was after 1920 when the Avenue oil field was proven a success. The Downtown is quite different, and The Avenue is entirely different. The city burst its bounds to the east and extended to Five Points. And many of the old buildings were remodeled until they were no longer the same. From an historical viewpoint we began to lose what should have been saved.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ventura Street.
2. 'Lower Town'.
3. Anacapa Hotel.
4. A barouche should be described: it is a four-wheel carriage with a high seat in front for the driver; and seating for four people inside, facing each other. It belonged to one of the livery stables and was reserved for special occasions: when President McKinley visited Ventura in 1900; and again when President Theodore Roosevelt came a few years later. It was also used for some parades. R.G.P.
5. Tico adobe on the southeast corner of his grant of 28.9 acres (Tico Lot).
6. The 'pink house'.
7. Spear's Block.
8. S. John's Methodist Episcopal Church, South.
9. S. Paul's was the last building in the church block.

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Mrs. Richard Bard
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Beardsley, Jr.
Nathan W. Blanchard III
Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Buis
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Conway
Samuel R. Edwards, M.D.
Lloyd R. Emmert
Mr. and Mrs. Martin H. Gilbert
Evelyn and Robert Grosfield
Mrs. Charlotte K. Hails
Mr. and Mrs. Graham Q. Hutchinson
Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Johnston
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jue
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene C. Kimball
Dr. and Mrs. J. F. Lincoln
Mr. and Mrs. William C. Lukes
Ginger and Ed Lynch
Mr. and Mrs. James D. McCormick
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel D. Mandell
Mr. and Mrs. John A. Maring
Mrs. Ernest F. Menzies
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VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Vol. XXII, No. 2 Winter 1977

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Nine hundred and twenty-five copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by Clark's Printing Co., Ventura, California. Additional copies are available at $2.00 each.

The
Ventura County Historical Society
Quarterly

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Grant W. Heil, Editor

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Notice

The diagramatic representation on the last page was produced under the author's direction to explain Part III of the text. Unless otherwise noted, he photographed the pictures.

THE CROSS AND OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

By James L. Nolan

I. Juan Pablo Ayala

I was being asked to evaluate the importance of the painting before my eyes as I stood on the mountaintop estate of one of the benefactors of the new Ventura County Historical Museum, Katherine H. Haley. The image of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, literally covered with two centuries of grime and dirt, could hardly be seen. Moreover the 34.5 by 29.25 inch canvas itself had been folded twice like a handkerchief and stored in that position for at least a century, leaving vertical and horizontal crease marks in the form of a cross right in the middle of the painting. "Crease-cross", I thought amusingly to myself.

More seriously the Cross and Our Lady of Mount Carmel was the way Padre Junípero Serra had thought of the foundation of the first mission in Alta California,[1] established in honor of San Diego de Alcalá in 1769. Several times he had noted that this first mission had been founded on "the day of the Triumph of the Most Holy Cross and of Our Most Blessed Lady of Mt. Carmel".[2] And this symbolism *was* important. Serra's successor,Fray Fermín Lasuén, would recall it in his 1783 retrospective of that mission.[3] More importantly, four years later in 1787, Fray Francisco Palóu would reproduce Serra's own phraseology in the *Vida* and relate its general significance to the foundation ceremony as the father President undoubtedly originally intended.[4] For these two patrons of that first day, the Cross and the Virgin and Child, were identical to the two iconographic devices actually employed at that mission's foundation: *the tall fifteen or so foot cross;* and opposite that, both at San Diego in that first year and later at Monterey[5] in 1770, *the statue*[6] *of the Virgin and Child* as *Nuestra Señora de Belen,* commonly referred to as *la Conquistadora.* As I had only recently proven for the first time, that had been Serra's practice generally throughout the rest of the missions. There was the cross and opposite that the Virgin upon the altar.[7] At San Antonio de Padua in 1771 he would employ a painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the altar in the *enramada* opposite the cross; at San Luís Obispo, according to Serra's own statement, a painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, possibly the same painting before my very eyes at that moment.

The foundation ceremony altar decoration at Mission San Carlos de Borromeo 1770; and without the oak tree, the same for San Diego de Alcala on the feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross and of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Imaginative pen and ink sketch by Mary Margaret Carter.

This representation of the Virgin so closely associated with the Carmelite Order of the Catholic Church had been given to the Pioneer Museum in 1913, in the county museum's own foundation year, by a deputy sheriff of Ventura who was more importantly a member

of one of the more distinguished families of the southwest. His name was Pablo Ayala. The Administrative Assistant at the Ventura County Historical Museum, Patricia Ann Chase, was the first to take a serious interest in the painting and had encouraged the present Director of the museum, Richard R. Esparza, to have an authority in Santa Barbara determine if it had been completed by the masterful hand of Murillo as its 17th century style of composition in some respects suggested. My personal attention had been first drawn to it by the same director, just three weeks previously, while he was visiting the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. When I was introduced to him as a specialist in California mission art, Esparza complained to me about his disappointment over having been told that a painting in his museum's possession, originally from Mission San Luís Obispo, had not turned out to be a Murillo as he had hoped.

"It was an interesting depiction of the Virgin and Child and very old," I could remember him remarking. "Not this big?" I returned, holding out my hands separated by three or four feet in front of him. "Why, yes," he replied somewhat struck with surprise. "It isn't of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, is it?" After some hesitation, Esparza said that he did think it was, a fact confirmed the next day from the painting's entry card at the Ventura County Historical Museum. "If it is an *el Carmen,* that is an Our Lady of Mt. Carmel holding the scapulars," I recalled telling him encouragingly, "and if it can be traced to San Luís Obispo in mission times as you have suggested, then you probably have a very rare and indeed an invaluable painting on your hands for it would almost surely be the very same image employed by Serra upon that mission's foundation altar, the fifth established in the chain, dedicated in 1772."

"How can you possibly make such a generalization," I can recall someone else remarking logically; "there are hundreds of paintings of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel around. Why must this be the one employed by Serra in 1772?" It did not appear logical; historical investigation rarely does. However, if there had been a plenitude of such images of the Virgin in California in mission times, then obviously such a statement could not have been made. In fact in all formal mission records to survive there are but two references to the Virgin as Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, one of considerable interest (which shall be discussed subsequently) at Mission San Carlos Borroméo for the year 1791 and another at Mission Santa Barbara (first mentioned in the 1834/35 inventory and still at that mission).[8]

The painting at San Carlos Borroméo had long since disappeared even in mission times (it had never been listed in any inventory of that mission for instance); and the one at Santa Barbara, famous for having been described by W. H. Brewer as the "Virgin with the broken scale of justice in her hand"[9] rather than a scapular for which Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is known, is massive in size (14.1 by 7.5 feet!) hardly an appropriate proportion for a small mission foundation altar out in the middle of a wilderness.[10] It only remained to establish two facts beyond any reasonable doubt: that the painting at the Ventura County Historical Museum was indeed a depiction of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, which was why I was standing before it at Mrs. Haley's estate; and secondly, that this image as its entry card implied did come from Mission San Luís Obispo.

As others had determined before me according to this painting's entry card at the museum, there could be no doubt: this was a representation of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Although badly but not irreparably damaged, the canvas still revealed the essentials of its original composition: the Virgin and Child, with the former holding a scapular in her right hand; a kneeling eremitical figure, possibly St. Elias in the lower right (the supposed founder of the Carmelite Order); and a youthful figure on the lower left of uncertain identity, possibly a soul in purgatory awaiting its release through the sabbatine privilege of this particular devotion to the Virgin.[11] The only question remaining related to the exact identification of the donor of this art object to the Pioneer Museum, and the exact manner by which he came into its possession.

All of the immediate evidence available was on the painting's entry card:

OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL

Ayala, Pablo
Creek Road
Ventura

Identified as above by Father Grogan of SBV Mission. At least 250 years old. Given to grandfather of Pablo Ayala by Father Blas Ordas of San Luis Obispo Mission, Ayala having been administrator of the temporalities of that mission after its secularization. Thought to be a copy of a Spanish Murillo who awlays dressed the Christ Child as in picture. In the possession of the Ayala family, folded up, for many years.

The difficulty was in the remark about Blas Ordas who did not serve at Mission San Luís Obispo[12] when Juan Pablo Ayala was there as a secular administrator from 1839 to 1840.[13] This padre's stay at

San Luís Obispo was for a brief seven months in 1823.[14] He was known for his somewhat more notorious[15] four year stay at Mission San Buenaventura where Juan Pablo's brother Crisógono Ayala served in a similar secular capacity; but even Ordas' term of service at Ventura from 1833 to 1837[16] did not correspond to Crisógono's stay there from 1842-1844.[17] From the evidence on the entry card alone presented above, the grandfather who is there unnamed might have been either Juan Pablo Ayala of San Luís Obispo or Crisógono Ayala of Ventura. The evidence at the museum, therefore, had to be clarified in terms of the genealogical facts of the case. Who was Pablo Ayala's grandfather, Crisógono or Juan Pablo?[18]

The central difficulty to develop in pursuit of Pablo Ayala's predecessor was the location of the whereabouts of Juan Pablo Ayala after his stay at San Luís Obispo in 1839 and 1840. His name was not listed in any of the late nineteenth century directories, neither for San Luís Obispo, Santa Barbara or Ventura. That may be why the Juan Pablo Ayala line had not been included in the standard genealogies. This problem was solved by the discovery of his funeral record in the death register at Mission Santa Barbara, no. 1860, written in such an illegible hand that only Father Maynard Geiger, the archivist there, was able to decipher the script. Juan Pablo Ayala had been buried at Santa Barbara on November 24, 1861 at the age of 57, even though he had been a resident of Carpinteria.

The 1860 census for Santa Barbara County (p. 49) subsequently consulted at the Santa Barbara Historical Society library listed Juan Pablo and his family the year before his death as follows:

Juan P.	*Ayala*	*57 m Farmer*
Joaquina	*Ayala*	*49 f*
Ramon	*Ayala*	*21 m*
Cresenciana	*Ayala*	*16 f*
Juanna	*Ayala*	*4 f*
Pedro	*Ayala*	*23 m Servant*
Juanna	*Ayala*	*13 f Servant*

In the same 1860 census however, Crisógono Ayala, age 67, had another Ramon Ayala living with him, age 11, a fact of some importance since Sol. N. Sheridan, the first curator of Ventura's museum, in his *History of Ventura County, California* identified a man of that name, Ramon Ayala, as the father of Deputy Sheriff Pablo Ayala, the donor of the painting of the Virgin to the Pioneer Museum. More importantly Sheridan asserted that this Ramon Ayala served in the

War Between the States with the California volunteers and subsequently became major-domo of Santa Cruz Island for many years[19] after his early marriage to Rita Davies of the Cota family of Carpinteria.[20]

Therefore, although Juan Pablo Ayala and his brother Crisógono both had a Ramon Ayala in their household when the above mentioned 1860 census was taken, only one of these could have served in the war:[21] the oldest son of Juan Pablo Ayala; not the eleven year old Ramon who had been living with Crisógono, the former administrator of San Buenaventura Mission. Moreover, if the Ramon who was the son of Juan Pablo Ayala was 21 in 1860, he would have been born in 1839, the first year of his father's administration at San Luís Obispo. Upon consulting the baptismal register of that mission for that year, one finds under entry no. 2833 a José Ramon De los Santos Ayala baptized on November 3, 1839 as the son of *"el administrada de esta Mision, Don Pablo Ayala y Joaquina Lugo"*, signed by Padre Ramon Abella.[22] Therefore, Ramon Ayala, the father of Deputy Sheriff Pablo Ayala, *was* without any doubt born at San Luís Obispo Mission where his father Juan Pablo Ayala was the administrator.[23]

The question then arises as to why Pablo Ayala, the son of this Ramon, donated the painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel to the Pioneer Museum when he did, in 1913. The answer to this question is equally clear: that was the year that his widowered father died.[24] The deputy sheriff must have had an idea of the value of the painting (San Luís Obispo is written all over the entry card). But clearly he could not hang it in his own home in its folded and frankly unsightly state. Hence, quite logically, he gave it to the new museum that was to open up in the latter part of that year.

Thus, there can be no doubt about the origin of the painting in question. It came from San Luís Obispo Mission as its entry card emphatically states, taken from that secularized establishment at the close of the mission period. Since no other depiction of the Virgin and Child of this particular designation is known to have come from San Luís Obispo Mission or for that matter from any other California mission whatsoever for this early period in the 1770's and since Serra himself stated that such a painting was employed at San Luís Obispo, we can only assume the obvious.

This invaluable depiction of the Virgin and Child, possibly so severely darkened by the nearly disastrous fires at San Luís Obispo Mission,[25] served at the foundation of that mission in 1772; but was

Original state of the Ventura painting. Print by Thomas Roe.

given to one of the few well-liked administrators of the missions, Juan Pablo Ayala, who in turn passed it on to his son Ramon. Upon his death this foundation painting was given to Ventura County museum in the year of its own foundation in 1913 but even more fortuitous yet, has now been finally recognized for what it truly is in this present year of the foundation of the new building that Mrs. Haley and so many others have worked so hard to establish. How fitting a symbol.

San Luís Obispo, then, began with a painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel upon its foundation altar. No other mission has now or ever had a painting that might have been the one employed by Serra in 1772 to our knowledge. And this particular Ventura County Historical Museum madonna unquestionably came from San Luís Obispo where it had been in mission times.

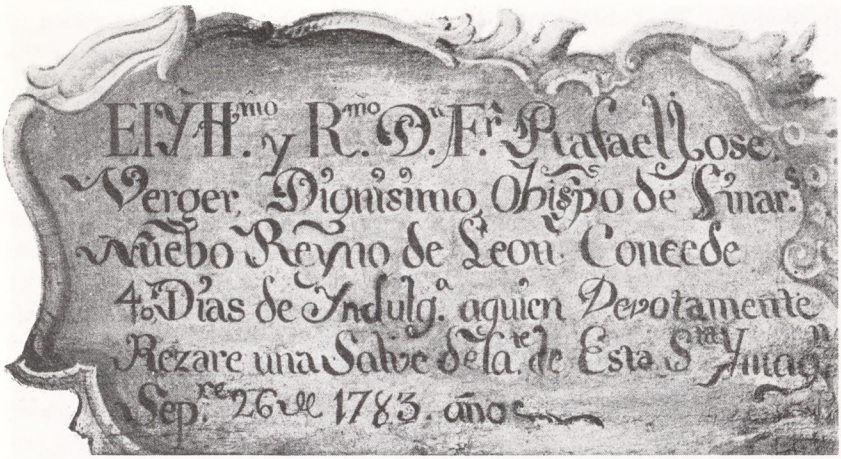
Only one other factor had to be considered. Time has not treated San Luís Obispo Mission's annual reports gracefully. Fully 21 of of these 58 official *informes* made out during the mission period have been lost. Furthermore, not one inventory of the effects of the church has survived to tell us of its original contents. Under such circumstance anything could happen. San Luís Obispo's church interior had been examined and even photographed previously in the 1960's, and all accounts of the mission's art objects had been read (including Mary Gordon Holway's early and therefore valuable essay on *The Art of the Old World in New Spain and the mission days of Alta California* which devotes pages 140 to 141 to San Luís Obispo Mission's paintings specifically). In annual reports, essays of any kind and all published and unpublished photographic collections of any account I had never encountered another depiction of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel for San Luís Obispo. But that would not necessarily mean that such a painting was not there today even though no evidence whatsoever was possessed to suggest that fact. Therefore, just before sitting down to write this article, I thought it prudent to check. I can hardly express adequately the sense of shock felt upon entering San Luís Obispo's mission church and seeing in the first painting visible on the right an image of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, hanging on the wall, beautifully lit, as though it had been there for a hundred years. As W. W. Robinson used to say, always visit a location before writing about it. I did, and if the painting found had not been dated (an extremely rare phenomenon for a mission period piece) this article would not now be in print. But since this second painting found at the mission is of considerable interest and value in itself, let us examine it briefly before moving on to speak of the significance or function of the Ventura painting not only in San Luís Obispo's foundation ceremony but in the development of that church's iconographic system about which we know so little for the mission period.

II. The Verger Painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

The Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Don Fray Rafael Verger, Most Dignified Bishop of Linares,[26] *Province of Nuevo Leon, concedes Four Days Indulgence to Whomever Devotedly says a Salve to the Virgin of this Image, September 26, 1783.*

These are the words that may be read off the bottom of the small[27] but beautifully executed painting of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, recently restored in 1972 through the graces of Mrs. Frances Bressi[28] and presently hanging in the rear of San Luís Obispo's church on the epistle side; and they *are* replete with historical significance relating to the foundation period of this mission. For just shortly after the beginning of the conquest of Alta California this clear thinking, often severely realtistic individual mentioned above, Rafael Verger, O.F.M., was placed at the head of the Apostolic College of San Fernando just "outside of the walls of Mexico City",[29] in fact just after his return from Spain where he had personally recruited 44 Franciscan padres for the missionary field of Upper and Lower California.[30] Fray José Cavaller, the founding father of San Luís Obispo, had arrived at San Fernando College just before Verger's return from Spain, late in 1769 or early in 1770;[31] but when he sailed from San Blas on the packet boat San Antonio for Alta California on March 21, 1771 and later when he was selected for this mission in August of 1772, he and indeed Serra himself were both under the guardianship of Fray Rafael Verger. And therefore it was to Verger that Serra wrote about San Luís Obispo's foundation painting: *Nuestra Señora del Cármen para los Padres de San Luís . . . poner en el altar*[32] that is about the painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel for the padres of San Luís . . . to place on the altar.[33]

At the time of the founding of San Luís Obispo, even when placing the image of the Ventura Virgin and Child upon that mission's foundation altar, Serra knew he would have to leave only one padre there under circumstances that would eventually lead to outright famine if not martyrdom. To Serra this was an unavoidable, an absolutely necessary but above all an heroic circumstance. In far distant Mexico City, Verger, more realistic, had other ideas. In fact he was calling the entire enterprise in Upper California a ridiculous quixotic affair;[34] an absurd attempt to found a mission like San Luís Obispo or San Carlos Borroméo which were both farther away from Mexico City by two times than had been the furthest campaigns



The legend on the bottom right hand corner of the restored Verger painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel at Mission San Luis Obispo.

of Julius Caeser in Gaul from Rome.[35] How absurd. And this was being attempted upon an amount of money (1,000 pesos) insufficient to pay for the cattle and seed for such institutions to say nothing of the cost of transporting these animals there along wih the necessary farming implements.[36] Then the labor had to be supplied. Frankly how stupid and unbelievably quixotic could anyone be?

Throughout the year before San Luís Obispo was founded and after, Verger had been attempting to tell the government officials in the capital of New Spain not merely that the 350 peso annual stipend for each padre was insufficient and definitely below prior and past precedent,[37] but that the above mentioned missions, despite the optimistic reports of their zealous President, Father Serra, "have not been, are not now, and never will become formal towns".[38] To this Verger mentioned above in the painting, a mission foundation needed realistic planning; to Serra as he stated with regard to San Luís Obispo specifically, what was needed was the help of God.[39] Therefore these two paintings of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and the circumstances under which these men came to employ them were both characteristic of each man. Finding himself out in the middle of a wilderness in need of four representations of the Virgin for the altars of the new missions planned at San Antonio de Padua and San Luís Obispo in the north and San Gabriel and San Buenaventura in the south, Serra was more than delighted to find this humble painting of *el Cármen,*

now at the Ventura County Historical Museum, in the possession of the padres slated for Missions San Gabriel. With the founder of the California missions, almost all was fortuitous and unplanned.

The Verger painting, turned out by a more masterful hand, tells its viewer almost all that he would want to know about the celebrity who had it commissioned and at the same time all that he might wish to know about this famous Virgin and patroness of the Carmelite Order. That is the way Verger would have wanted it, to be informative. Above in the representation of the Trinity one could see the large cross to the left, associated with the male figure of San José below[40] (and doubtlessly San Joaquin and Santa Anna below him) and to the right directly opposite was the Creator and more importantly that sphere depicting the whole material universe at His feet under which stood the graceful female figure of Santa Teresa and the two men of such great influence in her life below, no doubt the Franciscan San Pedro de Alcántara so helpful in guiding Santa Teresa spiritually[41] and below him either San Francisco de Borja or more likely San Juan de la Cruz, all most important figures in some way connected either directly or indirectly with the famous 16th century reform of the Carmelite Order in Spain.

Verger would have liked this placement of the male figure to the left underneath the cross and the female one to the right underneath the entire material creation because it represented a principle and was informative as well. Serra used the same device in the frontispiece to his lectures on Scotist thought in Spain. The same arrangement would be used not only for the images in the missions of California but also for the Indian neophyte men and women who stood below them. So too was this dichotomy employed in the mission foundation ceremonies generally and at San Luís Obispo in particular.[42]

Furthermore, for an administrator of consumate ability like Verger, everything had to be arranged down to the last detail. Hence the inscription. What was the point of having such a lovely painting of the Virgin and Child if it was not appreciated? What better way to insure its appreciation than to offer its viewer a four day indulgence for the recitation of a *Salve Regina* to the Virgin depicted in this image? That is why the presence of this image at San Luís Obispo is of interest. No one knows how it got there; that is clear. Yet it was to Verger that Serra had written to tell him of his use of the Ventura painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel at that mission.

The Verger painting at Mission San Luis Obispo, with the Trinity at the top and the donor's name at the bottom left.

The Ventura painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel restored by Katherine H. Haley at the Ericson Studio, which also photographed the picture. The author's exposition was supported when the cleaning exposed a star-dotted mantle on the Virgin.

The Verger painting of *el Carmén* then (at San Luís Obispo but in the attic art gallery according to local tradition until its restoration in 1972[43]) could not have been more appreciated than at a mission where that particular presentment of the Virgin had been employed as the founding patroness. That is how Verger's mind worked. After he became bishop in the summer of 1783, he undoubtedly had the work commissioned himself personally or oversaw its execution with the approval of the individual whose name appears at the bottom, Don Ignacio Espinosa de los Monteros, who represented either the artist or donor. And then one thinks of the only other painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel known to have arrived in Upper California in this early period, the missing one at San Carlos Borroméo which came there in 1791, *the year following Verger's death in 1790,* the same painting that was never recorded in either of the exhaustive inventories of the mission in later times.[44]

The two paintings in California of Our Lady of Mount Carmel known to have been made before 1790 are of great interest because they may be associated with two of the most powerful and influential men in the Franciscan conquest of Upper California; and both of these works of art so representative of the character of these two men have now come to be associated with Mission San Luís Obispo and particularly its foundation.[45] The two men were indeed like the two iconographic devices of that foundation: Serra roughly hewn like the tall foundation cross; Verger more personally self-protective and sedate like the Ventura image of the Virgin and Child originally placed on San Luís Obispo's first altar. The latter, much appreciated in his own time for his brilliance and outstanding administrative abilities, became a bishop; the other, more likely than not, will become a saint.

III. The Ventura Painting in San Luís Obispo's Iconographic System

The value of the Verger painting transcends its general historical import. As already implied, it tells us something about the meaning of the iconographic devices employed by Serra at San Luís Obispo and any other mission foundation as well as the mission period use of statues and paintings in that mission's church. For instance, it may be taken as a principle that the cross opposite the creation in this Verger painting *was the equivalent* of the foundation cross opposite Our Lady of Mt. Carmel on September 1, 1772 at San Luís Obispo. That is, as may be seen more clearly elsewhere in California, women in general and particularly the Virgin symbolized the material cosmos. That was why the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel on San Luís Obispo's foundation altar wore clothing dotted with stars, why also in this Verger painting Santa Teresa, a woman, was placed under the blue sphere customarily dotted with stars to the right. Furthermore, that was why the neophyte Indian women would be placed on that side in the church. As the mission at San Luís Obispo gradually developed, naturally the simple foundation *enramada* was succeeded with a log cabin thatch-covered church at first so that the cross then stood opposite the star-dotted Virgin and Child now within this primitive structure on the main altar, placed underneath the painting of the patron after 1774. Fires threatened this early church as said, and so at last it was replaced quite early after 1782 by a tile covered structure[46] and finally by the present church completed in 1790.[47]

Padre José Cavaller, the founding father of San Luís Obispo, witnessed both Junípero Serra's initial dedication ceremony of the mission itself and the beginning of construction on the present church about which he must have had considerable say since he died in 1789, one year after it had been begun. If the principle elucidated above holds true that the cross opposite the entire star-filled universe in the Verger painting was the equivalent of the original cross opposite the *enramada* which enclosed the altar devoted to the star-dotted Virgin and Child at San Luís Obispo's foundation ceremony, then we should expect to find Cavaller in 1788 building the present church (the third replacement of that simple *enramada*) as an icon of that material universe shown in the Verger painting to the right for in his day the very same cross still would have been seen directly outside of this 1790 church of adobe and tile which exists today. And that was what was done if we may judge from what was found in

The star-studded ceiling board from Padre Jose Cavaller's 1790 church.

May of 1893 when the new wing was added on to the Cavaller church at San Luís Obispo:

> The boards of the ancient ceiling show no mark of the plane but would appear to have been hewn down to the required thinness and smoothness with hatchets or similar implements . . . The decoration was equally crude, the boards having been first white washed and then rather archaic stars painted on the white surface with some thin blue coloring matter, and seemingly without a brush. To a relic hunter the old construction now being torn away would be of the greatest interest and value.[48]

As at San Antonio de Padua just to the north and elsewhere, here at San Luís Obispo this star-decked ceiling was employed by Padre Cavaller and his successors to make the church an icon of the material universe precisely as implied in the Verger painting and the Serra foundation ceremony. In another article in relationship to San Antonio de Padua, I have taken the trouble to show that the padres of that mission actually left behind them manuscripts dated as early as 1773 which prove that they drew diagrams of this geocentric cosmos to make it possible for their Indian neophytes to understand both these strange iconographic usages in the church and the Spaniards' own explanations of the nature of terrestrial and celestial reality.[49] The fascination of these vestigal mission art forms is therefore not only that they may in the case of the Ventura madonna stand as an appropriate symbol of the exciting new museum completed there in this year; but much more, they do afford us real insights into a

The statue of the Purisima presently at Mission San Luis Obispo, undoubtedly of the mission period.

universal view that has been all but lost to us due to the vast discrepancies between our own and that former medieval world of *ecclesiastica* here on the west coast of America. And even more may be said.

From the above mentioned, much more systematic study, it may be deduced that missions like San Luís Obispo devoted to a patron not holding a cross developed along the following lines. First a cross was employed at its foundation opposite a representation of a Virgin on the main and only altar; in these cases usually a modest sized painting was used with the exception of San Diego de Alcalá and San Carlos Borroméo where statues were employed. Then, before the celebration of the mission's twentieth year, this painting would have been replaced by a statue of a *Purisima* for the main altar (at San Antonio de Padua just to the north and founded the year before San Luís Obispo, this statue of the Virgin arrived in 1777).[50] Such a *Purisima* does exist at Mission San Luís Obispo today, which undoubtedly appeared in the late seventies. It would have come for

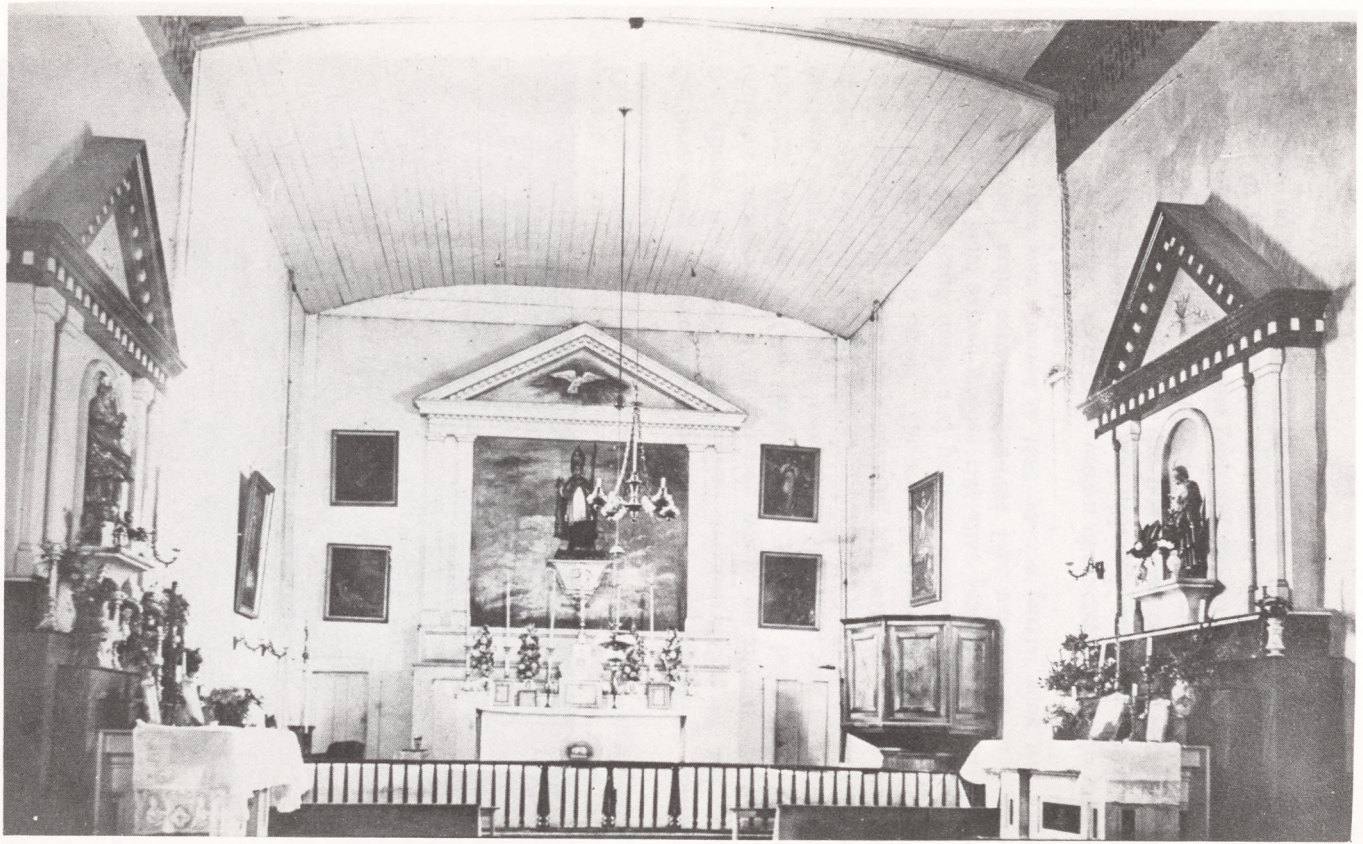
the festivities of 1792 for which event the present church was obviously completed in 1790. When this new statue of the Virgin was placed on the main altar, the foundation painting was generally removed to the side altar to the right which, as in the Verger painting, was the side of the church where the women stood, separated from the men on the left by a central aisle running from the rear door to the main altar.[51]

In 1791, the year before these festivities and a year after the completion of the present church, a large painted collateral canvas came that probably covered the entire back wall of the sanctuary behind the main altar (again like San Antonio de Padua Mission)[52] along with the present statue of San Luís Obispo with its niche. According to a law that may be deduced from all missions about which we have definite knowledge,[53] this delightful statue of the mission's youthful patron would have been placed directly above the altar on his wall bracket while the *Purisima* would have been placed directly below him on the tabernacle niche perhaps. Again as at San Antonio de Padua (where a *Guadalupe* was so treated) here at San Luís Obispo also the foundation painting of the Virgin would have been removed to the side altar to the right, the other altar to the left being devoted to a cross or a saint holding a cross (such as San Francisco de Asis).

That would mean that the altar to the right where the women stood on the old epistle side of the church should have been devoted to the Virgin. But how can this hypothetical arrangement at San Luís Obispo be checked in the complete absence of inventories? It can be done. In the annual report of 1812 we are informed that three new altar tables of wood were made *á la Romana.*[54] This would mean that these altars, as at San Antonio de Padua, San Miguel just to the north, Santa Barbara and San Luís Rey to mention a few other missions, were constructed in the form of half-urns in relief, suspended from the wall while tapering down to a single foot.[55] Sometime between the mission period and the oldest photograph of the interior of Mission San Luís Obispo's church interior, these altars were replaced by others of a more conventional rectangular shape with a pediment top to the altarpiece back that look suspiciously like the work of Padre Cyprian Rubio who did the same to San Juan Bautista and San Buenaventura Missions.

When the pediment-topped side altar to the right had to be torn out in 1893 to make way for the opening in the wall required for

of 1893 but after reconstruction, with the 1791 statue of its patron behind the altar.



The oldest photograph of the interior of Mission San Luis Obispo's church taken before the new wing was added in May of 1893 but after reconstruction, with the 1791 statue of its patron behind the altar.

The board from the 1812 side altar to the right with the Virgin's crown and monogram upon it.

the new wing,[56] there was exposed the proof needed to substantiate the above mentioned hypothetical reconstruction of the mission church's iconography. On that side where we should expect to find the altar devoted to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel behind the Rubio or modern altar that was torn away from the wall, was found a portion of the old mission period side altar formerly built there *á la Romana*; more importantly, as if by a miracle, still with its crown and monograph of the Virgin on it! The mission museum card placed below this obviously hand made and painted board states:

> Part of hand carved wooden side altar [clearly not part of the one removed] built between 1792-1794 [sic, actually in 1812 as said]. The altar was removed in 1893 when a partial wing was added on the original building . . .

What is seen here is an open crown characteristic of the one worn by Our Lady of Mt. Carmel; and although one may doubt that the exact shape of this crown on the board was taken from the Ventura painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, one may not doubt that this altar to the right where this painting should have been placed was devoted to the Virgin as the monogram explicitly makes clear and as general mission usage would suggest.

The pattern of placement of images at San Luís Obispo Mission was no different from those employed in other mission churches about which we have a much more abundant supply of data. If the reader is interested, these facts are presented and developed much more systematically with regard to those other missions elsewhere. In those articles[57] it will be shown in part that this pattern at San Luís Obispo was not only typical of other missions of California but was repeated throughout the iconographic systems of the medieval world where they were employed as they were here in California to establish characteristically European behavior. And indeed, to us this painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, which shall be associated with the opening of the Ventura County Historical Museum in this year of 1977, should be considered a precious vestige of that medievalism even as it was employed here in America. However, to the founder of the Spanish missions themselves, Fray Junípero Serra, this painting surely always remained a reminder of the foundation of California itself, which from his perspective in the 18th century took place on a specific day, the 16th day of July, *"dia del triumfo de la SSMA. Cruz y de N.SRA. Maria SSA. del Cármen . . ., en el año del Señor de 1769"*.

NOTES

1. Antonine Tibesar, O.F.M., *Writings of Junipero Serra* (4v., Washington, D.C., 1955) I, 157, "Letter to Palou, Feb. 10"; *ibid.*, I, 364, "Report to Bucareli, May 21, 1773, Mexico City".
2. The registers at Mission San Diego de Alcalá were lost in the revolt and fire of 1776 as stated by Serra himself in the long note in the second baptismal volume for that mission. On the title page of the new volumes the same phraseology was recalled as employed earlier in 1769:Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., *Mission San Diego* (San Francisco, 1920) p. 85-87. For a facsimile of the title pages of the baptismal and marital registers rewritten after the disaster of 1776 see *ibid.*, p. 84 and 141.
3. Finbar Kenneally, O.F.M., *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén* (2v., Washington, D.C., 1965) II, 360.
4. Francisco Palou, O.F.M., *Relacion Historica de la Vida y Apostolicas Tareas del Venerable Padre Fray Junipero Serra* (Mexico, 1787) p. 82; Maynard Geiger, O.F.M., *Palou's Life of Fray Junípero Serra* (Washington, D.C., 1955) p. 75.
5. Tibesar, I, 189.
6. Not a painting as Tibesar, *ibid.* and Geiger, *op. cit.*, p. 119 had at first thought; but a statue now at Carmel Mission.
7. James L. Nolan, "Anglo-American myopia and California mission art," *Southern California quarterly*, LVIII, no. 1, Spring 1976, p. 11-20 and in greater detail, no. 3, Fall 1976, p. 261-273.
8. Kurt Baer, *Painting and sculpture at Mission Santa Barbara* (Washington, D.C., 1955) p. 184-186, apparently still on loan to Mission San Antonio de Padua.
9. William H. Brewer, *Up and down California in 1860-1864*, ed. Francis P. Farquhar (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1974) p. 57.
10. Today in the missions of California there are only two others to my knowledge. One is at San Carlos de Borroméo, bought in modern times from a dealer now deceased by Henry J. Downie (Sir Harry Downie. Ed.) This folds out in three parts and stands as a single unit some six feet in height; again hardly a likely size for such a small mission foundation altar even if there was a shred of evidence that the painting was connected to the missions or even California, which there is not. The second shall form the basis of the second part of this study and is of considerable interest.
11. For this information I would like to thank Richard Joseph Menn, formerly of the Carmelite Order, now working at San Carlos Borroméo in Carmel under Henry J. Downie. This was an indulgence granted the Carmelite Order especially based originally upon a spurious papal bull of 1322, later ratified by other popes, promising liberation from purgatory the Saturday after death through the intercession of the Virgin Mary. See "sabbatine" in Webster's unabridged dictionary.
12. Englehardt, *Mission San Luís Obispo* (Santa Barbara, 1963) p. 203.
13. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Register of pioneer inhabitants of California 1542 to 1848* (Los Angeles, 1964) p. 706. Henceforth, *Pioneer register.*
14. Engelhardt, *San Luís Obispo*, p. 203.
15. Geiger, *Franciscan missionaries in Hispanic California, 1769-1848* (San Marino, 1969) p. 172-174.
16. Engelhardt, *Mission San Buenaventura* (Santa Barbara, 1930) p. 133.
17. *Pioneer register*, p. 706.
18. Fortune did not choose to smile upon the efforts initially put forth in this investigation. Marie Northrop's excellent and long awaited *Spanish-Mexican families in early California, 1769-1850* so valuable in this area of research, did not include the Juan Pablo Ayala line. Neither did the related Thomas Workman Temple II material down at the Los Angeles County Museum, even though William Mason's

valuable direction was a considerable aid. Moreover the Morman genealogical library in Westwood was closed for the year; and the Ventura County Historical Museum itself which housed the painting, although it contained cards of importance relating to other Ayala gifts in 1913, was in the process of packing for its eventual move to the new quarters opposite the mission, leaving everything on 77 N. California St. if not in all of Ventura in an utter state of chaos (or so it seemed).

19. (2v., Chicago, 1926) I, 87, 118, and 128-130.
20. Sheridan, *ibid.*, I, 129, regarding Ramon: He married early, his wife being Rita Davies, a daughter of one of the Cotas of Carpinteria. In 1855 we find Juan Pablo Ayala a delegate to the Democratic Convention representing Township Number Two, i.e., Carpinteria (Thompson & West's *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, California, with illustrations* ((Oakland, 1883)) p. 99, col. 1). Ramon's wife's baptism is recorded at Santa Barbara Mission, no. 1229, which took place on September 26, 1837, parents Juan Davis and Rosenda Cota.
21. Sheridan, *loc. cit.*
22. See also entry in the death register no. 2500 where the administrator's son, Joaquin de Guadalupe age 4, is spoken of in similar terms.
23. Juan Pablo Ayala, Ramon's father and Deputy Sheriff Pablo Ayala's grandfather, was baptized at Santa Barbara Mission, entry no. 264, on June 28, 1803 as Juan Pablo De los Santos Ayala, son of José Calixto Ayala and Juana Vitala Feliz who were themselves the first to be married at Santa Barbara on December 13, 1786, entry no. 1. He married Joaquina Lugo y Paula Rubio at Santa Barbara, entry no. 204. Twenty-one years after leaving San Luís Obispo in 1840 when his son Ramon was off serving with the California Batallion of cavalry no doubt, Juan Pablo Ayala passed away and was buried at Santa Barbara Mission on November 24, 1861.
24. *The Ventura Daily Democrat* for the Sunday of June 22, 1913, ran the headline full caps on the first page: RAMON AYALA, PIONEER AND VETERAN, CROSSES DIVIDE. See also, the *Ventura Free press*, Friday, June 27, 1913. The Ventura County Recorder's office (and for this information I must thank Georgana B. Holland, an associate of mine at the Los Angeles County Museum) recorded Book, 33, p. 381 Records, lists the vital statistics of Ramon Ayala: born 11/2/1839; resident of Ventura; occupation, retired rancher; died 6/21/1913, age 73; Widower; father, Juan Pablo Ayala; mother, Joaquina Lugo. Certificate signed by Pablo Ayala. To complete the family genealogy down to Pablo Ayala, we might note that he died 12/6/1947, recorded Book 78, p. 435, was born 7/29/1870, occupation a retired police officer. Father, Ramon Ayala; mother, Rita Davies. Certificate signed by Virginia Ayala, his wife. Incidently, when a museum is in the process of moving, everything is in doubt. Although Pablo Ayala was typed on the entry card to the painting of *el Carmen* there, it did not state on the card that he was Deputy Sheriff Pablo Ayala, although the donor's street address was given: Creek Road. At the suggestion of Herlinda Carney, who also took the trouble to check Ramon Ayala's will, the Ventura County directories were checked from 1910 to 1934 from which evidence it may be shown that Deputy Sheriff Ayala in fact did live on Creek Road from between 1916/17 and 1934. As was later found out by Patricia Chase when two additional donation cards of Pablo Ayala were located at the Ventura County Historical Museum (both dated 1913) the undated card with the Creek Road address, from internal evidence, may be shown to have been rewritten.
25. Engelhardt, *San Luís Obispo*, p. 18-19 and 34-35.
26. Linares was the episcopal see of Bishop Rafael Verger in the Province of Nuevo Leon, New Spain, Geiger, *Palou's Life of Serra*, p. 327 and his

Life and times of Junípero Serra (2v., Washington, D.C., 1965) I, 86. Also, "Fray Rafael Verger, O.F.M. and the California mission enterprise", *Southern California quarterly*, XLIX, no. 2, June 1967, p. 206. From Geiger personally: Linares is just south of Monterrey, Mexico.

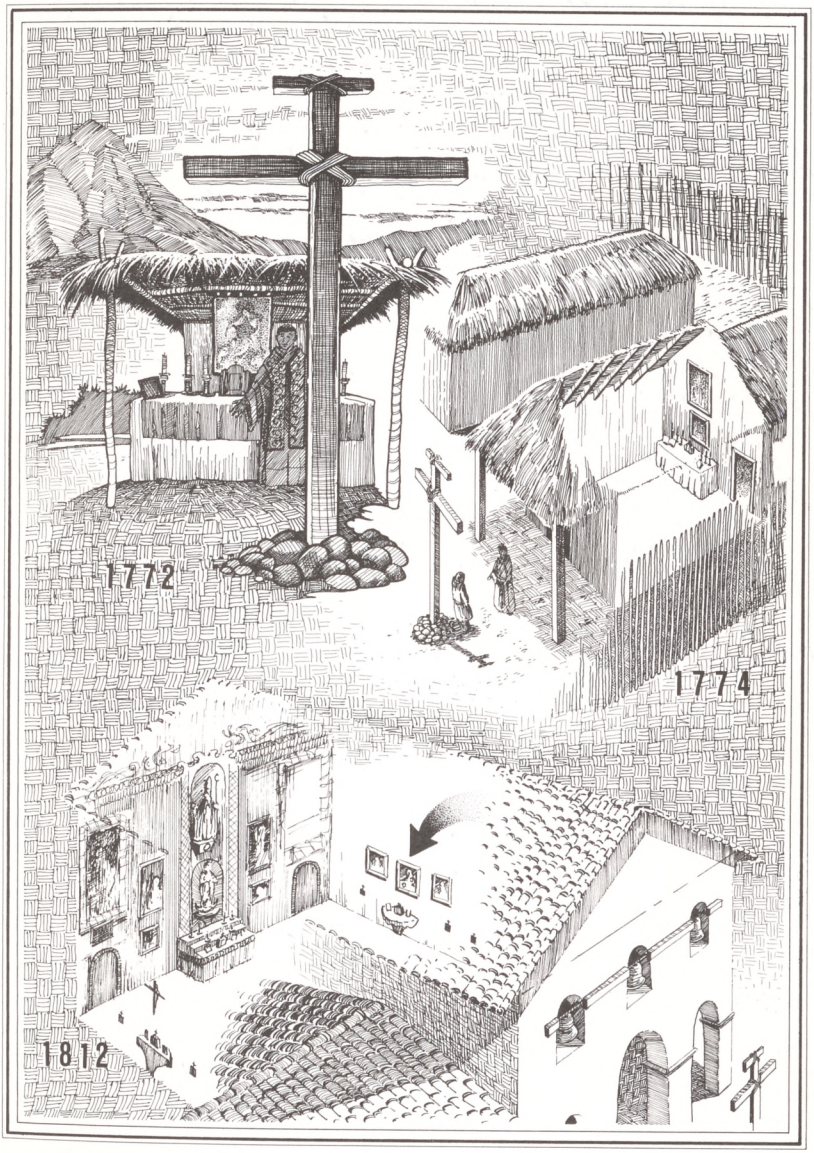
27. 29 by 40.5 inches, restored at Ericson Studio in Santa Barbara in 1972.
28. 35mm. slides of considerable value and detail, about six of each painting, before, during and after restoration, are in Mission San Luís Obispo's rectory safe.
29. Geiger, "Fray Rafael Verger", p. 225.
30. *Ibid*, p. 206. Verger's two terms in office at the Apostolic College of San Fernando were Dec. 1, 1770-May 14, 1774, and May 24, 1777-June 17, 1780.
31. Geiger, *Franciscan missionaries*, p. 47.
32. Tibesar, I, 222.
33. The general size of the paintings employed by Serra at San Antonio de Padua and San Luís Obispo, and at other missions later may be inferred from subsequent inventories. They were relatively small, about a *vara* or approximately three feet.
34. Geiger, "Fray Rafael Verger," p. 214.
35. The comparison is mine, the estimate of the distance Verger's: from 790 to 800 leagues or approximately 2,800 miles distance from Mexico City.
36. Geiger, "Fray Rafael Verger," p. 214-216.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 213-214.
38. There is a general misunderstanding about the quantity of art in even the most prosperous of the missions of California which might lead one to suppose (incorrectly) a relatively sumptuous state of affairs at the missions in their most prosperous times. In fact at the conclusion of the mission period even, the average church possessed merely three altars, each with from three to six images about it, plus the customary, usually quite primitive, representations of the stations of the cross. In later times when a mission closed down, its art was transferred at least in part to a neighboring one. By the turn of the century such a recipient would appear to have been laden with art in mission times. Good examples of these would be Mission Santa Barbara but less obviously San Miguel, and so on. But in the 18th century sparse was the only term to describe a mission interior.
39. Palou, *Vida*, p. 141; Geiger, ed., p. 127.
40. I have been informed that it is a custom in Carmelite churches to place San José to the left on the old gospel side, for which information I must again thank R. J. Menn. For the importance of San José in Santa Teresa's own life, see her autobiography, chapter VI.
41. This reference I received from Menn as well. See also *Catholic encyclopedia*, XIV, 516a and *The Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans., E. Allison Peers (New York, 1960), p. 249, 255-257 and 276-279. For San Francisco de Borja, *ibid.*, p. 230.
42. See note 7 above.
43. The most helpful at the mission itself was the Rev. George McMenamin whom I would like to thank for his courtesies: and also Cecelia Grisham who manages the mission museum and gift shop; elsewhere, above all, Mrs. Louisiana Clayton Dart, Curator of the San Luís Obispo's excellent little museum next to the mission, who directed me to the Reference and Local History Librarian Margaret Price who was of much help; and others, Ted Maino of Maino Construction Co. and Mrs. Frances Bressi. The difficulty trying to gather reliable information about San Luís Obispo's valuable paintings is hard to image. Although some six were only recently restored, I was assured that they had always hung in the church; a fact that only Mrs. Dart contested at first, a view supported by Mrs. Bressi who had the paintings restored and confirmed by Father George who took the trouble to show me the old

attic "art gallery" where they used to be displayed. I thank Paul Kocher as well for his informed telephone conversations.

44. There is no concrete evidence as yet, it must be stated, by any document or letter whatsoever that would explain the presence of this Verger painting at San Luís Obispo Mission. However the only *possible* reference found to this point is the one mentioned above at San Carlos Borroméo.
45. Of course I mean that only the Ventura painting was employed upon the San Luís Obispo foundation altar in 1772, the Verger piece not having been constructed until 11 years later in 1783. Still it was to Verger that Serra wrote about that initial painting, etc.
46. Geiger in his *Franciscan missionaries* under Cavaller, summarizes the views about which church had the first tiles in California, paraphrasing Palou who first asserts it of San Luís Obispo, then Edith Webb who selects San Antonio de Padua with which view Geiger concurs.
47. Annual report, Dec. 31, 1790: *"Se ha concluado y techado con tega el nuevo templo . . ."*, Bancroft confirming this view by saying that the present church was built before 1793, *History of California* (7v., San Francisco, 1884-98) I, 69; Webb, *Indian life at the old missions* (Los Angeles, 1952) p. 138. Geiger, *Franciscan missionaries*, p. 48.
48. The headlines for the March 28, 1920 issue of the *San Luís Obispo Tribune* (?) were FLAMES DESTROY SAN LUIS OBISPO MISSION ONE OF THE OLDEST IN THE STATE. The text of the article painted an even more bleak picture: "Nothing but the walls remained of the old edifice, and these were said to be greatly weakened and in danger of falling." However "the paintings said by the Mission attendants to be priceless and the Mission organ were saved." We are pleased to read in Mary Goldon Holway (San Francisco, 1922) p. 123 that "the boards (which are of uniform width) composing the ceilings of church and sacristy escaped the effect of fire and smoke and will be placed as they were in their original positions during the restoration which is now done (July, 1920). Both ceilings carry exceedingly crude decoration. The irregular shaped stars and other figures in black are painted over coarse white wash; there is no doubt whatsoever of the native work. Being placed so high, however, the appearance of the decoration was deceptive and the work impossible to study." These boards were later found in place by Henry J. Downie in 1947 when he restored the mission church, and according to his statement are still there above the present ceiling.
49. Nolan, *op. cit.*, no. 2, Summer 1976, p. 175. See also p. 184 for a diagram overlay and analysis of the interior of Mission San Antonio de Padua in its earliest photograph; also see the one page outline of the Serra lectures dealing with this cosmology, and the opposing diagram of the Ptolemaic universe taken from those same lectures, p. 180-181.
50. The reports for San Luís Obispo Mission are missing for the years 1776, 1777 and 1779 along with 1783, 1784 and 1785, the very time when the statue of the *Purisima* now at the mission, which is not recorded in any extant *informe*, should have come.
51. Alfred Robinson, *Life in California* (New York, 1846) p. 17. Also see the only lineup of mission Indian neophyte men and women to come from the mission period, the Malaspina copy of the La Pérouse sketch of San Carlos Borroméo. For Lasuén's description of this sketch left at the mission and hung and framed, see Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 234.
52. This collateral painting may have been exposed in part in 1920 during the great fire as Holway notes, *op. cit.*, p. 122: "In the conflagration of March 19th of the present year (1920) at San Luís Obispo Mission, fire and steam have been effectual agents in exposing not only interesting mural work on the sacristy walls but also a most exquisite decora-

tion on the two wooden lintels over the entrances to the altar space of the church beyond. This work ((stencilling?)) in alternate pairs of double scrolls in delicate blue and rose colors between parallel borders, is almost obliterated from the right lintel by smoke, but the left carries the definite pattern easily traced. The marks of the heavy blunt ax or other instrument remaining on the hand-hewn timber seem at variance with the delicacy of its ornamentation. On the same wall which divides the altar-space from the sanctuary, on the inner side, are rows of festoons in rose with a conventional figure joining the halves of each; other rows of festoons may have been painted above, but are not visible. Stars and rosetted figures are placed irregularly throughout the decoration; patches of flat dado in rose color, native work, appear where the some-grimed alien coat has flaked off during the intense heat."

53. For the arrival of the statue of the patron see the annual report for San Luís Obispo Mission, Dec. 31, 1812, SBMA. This law as stated by Nolan, *op. cit.*, no. 3, Fall 1976, p. 273 and 331, requires that the patron be placed above the Virgin over the main altar unless the patron carries the Infant, then she is above.
54. The annual report of 1820 for Mission Santa Barbara describes its altars with the same phrase, *á la Romana,* which in the 1858 inventory of that same mission are described as we know they were as half-urns in relief.
55. These types of altars were usually "hung" from the wall by one central or two balancing wooden beams built into the wall. When this beam or beams became termite ridden, the altar at first pulled away from the wall and then eventually fell. Doubtless the fate of San Luís Obispo's altars.
56. See May 18, and May 26 issues of the 1893 *San Luís Obispo Morning Tribune.*
57. Nolan, *op. cit.*, no. 3, Fall 1976, passim.



The position of the Ventura painting at Mission San Luís Obispo's foundation in 1772, in the mission church on the main altar in 1774, and in the present church on the side altar to the right in 1812. Pen and ink by Michael E. Cole.

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VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Vol. XXII, No. 3 Spring 1977

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Nine hundred copies printed for the Ventura County Historical Society by Clark's Printing Co., Ventura, California. Additional copies are available at $1.50 each.

The
Ventura County Historical Society
Quarterly

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Grant W. Heil, Editor

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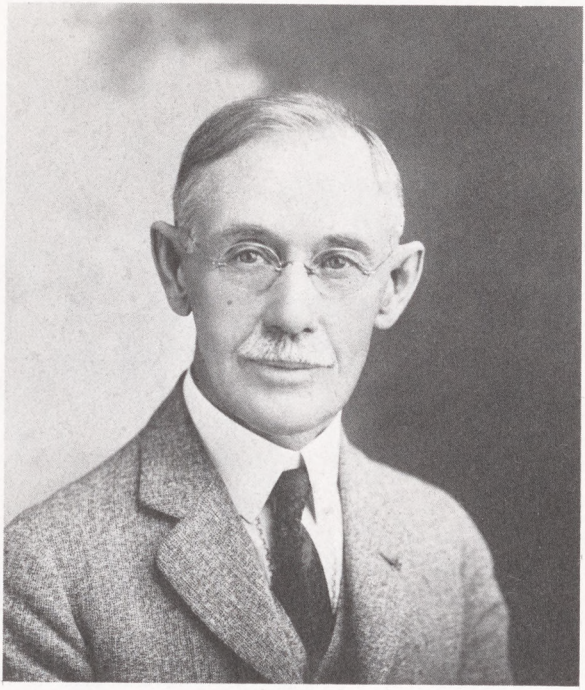
Notice

Both Bob Browne and David Hill provided the illustrations for their articles. Jim Burke, David Hill, Olivia Montana and Margaret Hunt Reimer lent photographs; others are from the Ventura County Historical Museum. The biographical article by "Tex" Ricard was one of the many jobs left at his untimely death. The charter itself is one of the museum's treasures.

Original Foothills Hotel



John J. Burke

FOOTHILLS HOTEL

By Robert O. Browne

Situated to the north of the town of Nordhoff on a bluff overlooking the Ojai Valley with the Ridge as a background, the Foothills Hotel had a most imposing site. The view from the front was magnificent.

The original structure was erected in 1903 and was a two and a half story frame. This building was destroyed in the forest fire of 1917. Rebuilt on the original foundations by 1919, it became a two story white stucco. It was a famous resort for winter tourists in the early 1900's. In 1942 it housed a boys' prep school, and was later sold to Jewish synagogues for use as a youth camp known as Camp Ramah. The buildings stood vacant from 1973 until their final razing in 1976 to clear the area for a modern housing development.

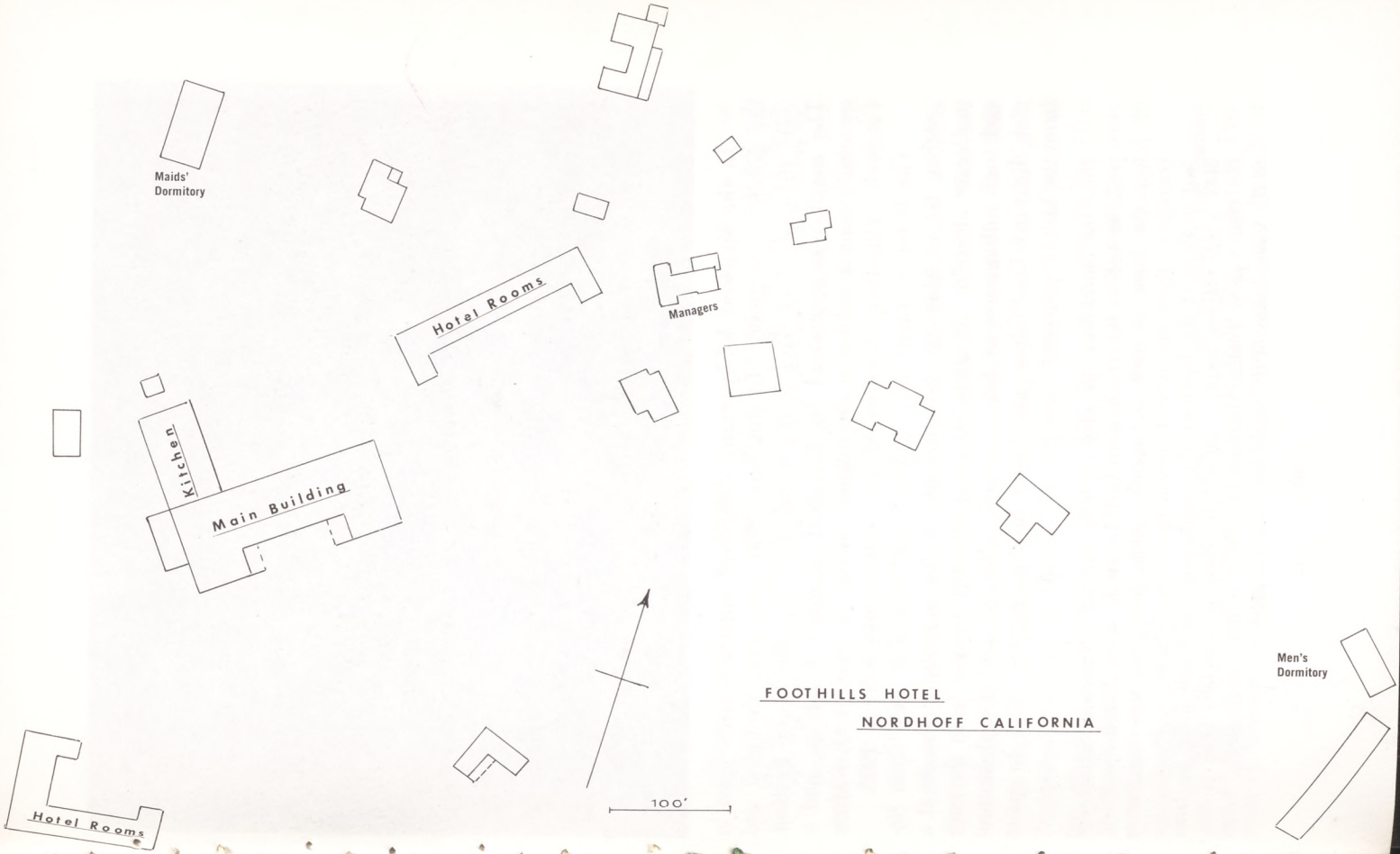
The hotel was originally constructed and operated by the Ojai Improvement Company under the leadership of John J. Burke. He

Second Foothills Hotel

was a prominent realtor and one time proprietor of the Ojai Valley House which had been built by A. W. Blumberg in the present Civic Park. Many years later Burke was associated with the Ojai Hotel Company which built the El Roblar Hotel, now known as The Oaks of Ojai.

The Foothills Hotel was one of a series of tourists' hotels that began with the Raymond Hotel in Pasadena in 1886, Hotel del Coronado in San Diego in 1887 and the Potter in Santa Barbara in 1902. Henry Morse was the first manager of The Foothills and remained as such for a number of years. It was during his operation that cottages were built around the main structure when the heyday of prosperity in the middle 1920's sent profits sky high.

When the main building was rebuilt after the fire of 1917, it consisted of a large lobby and one floor of 18 guest rooms, each with bath. A kitchen was attached to the northwest corner. The frontage of this hotel was 200 feet in length with a multiple arched portico. Another building (L-shaped with a fronting of 130 feet) and a west wing (90 feet long and built of stone) were for hotel guest rooms. An addition to the northeast of the main structure, the New Annex, was 175 feet by 25 feet and was also used for guests. Four cottages located near the hotel consisted of two or three bedrooms with baths, living room and sleeping porch. They were heated from the main hotel plant and had in addition open fires in the living rooms. Other buildings housed the maids' quarters, men's dormitory, manager's office and shops and barns.



FOOTHILLS HOTEL

NORDHOFF CALIFORNIA

In the spacious lobby many delightful entertainments open to the public were given. In this room 500 seats were provided, and were filled all three days of the wonderful Chamber Music Festival. The event was sponsored by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, and is generally considered to be the inspiration for the present Ojai Music Festival. This first Chamber Music Festival was held in 1926.

The hotel operated as a winter resort and was open from November 1st to May 1st, boasting of its dry mountain climate at a moderate altitude. It attracted many wealthy people from the east; and such millionaires as John D. Rockefeller, Sr. and the philanthropist, Edward D. Libbey, are listed in the register. But to quote from the hotel brochure:

> Here the out-of-door life may be fully enjoyed. Numerous government trails, as well as fine scenic trails built by public spirited winter residents, lure the lover of pack and saddle, while for those less energetic or courageous there are many beautiful mountain and canyon drives.
> Just in front of the hotel are the tennis courts and golf links, the latter 3000 yards playing length. Interest in tennis is especially keen in Ojai; the Ojai Valley Tennis Tournament, which is held each spring, brings to the Valley many of the world famed tennis players.

THE FOOTHILLS is the home of the Pure Food Table. We use no canned vegetables nor cold storage poultry. While we serve a simple bill, only the best products are used and these are carefully prepared. Our poultry and eggs are raised especially for this house, each having a distinctive flavor obtained by feeding clean foods. Our vegetables are fresh from the garden and choice Jersey milk and cream from our own dairy are served in abundance. Our water is piped direct from a tunnel in the mountains, 1500 feet above any habitation.

After the depression of 1929 business declined; and in 1942 the hotel was sold to the California Preparatory School. This had been started in Pasadena in 1917 as a military academy. In 1925 it was moved to Covina and was incorporated as the California Preparatory School for Boys. Dr. Murray Peabody Brush came to the school as Headmaster in 1932. The next move was to the Ojai Valley in June 1942, where the Foothills Hotel and cottages were remodeled for school purposes. The institution was equipped to accommodate 100 pupils.

In May 1955 the United Synagogues of America, under the leadership of Ben J. Lax, purchased the property from the California Preparatory School for Boys for the establishment of Camp Ramah of

California. *Ramah* is the Hebrew word for "Heights" and its attainment of the height of Jewish atmosphere, feeling and leadership is the goal of each Camp Ramah. Plans were made to accommodate 200 boys and girls ages from eight to 18 for camping and a general religious study program. The camp was open to children of the west coast. When the camp was sold, the Conference Center of the University of Judaism had to be moved as well.

The disappearance of the buildings in 1976 saw the demise of another of the historical landmarks of Ventura County.

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A SKETCH OF OJAI VALLEY FROM 1855

By David W. Hill

A sketch of the Ojai Valley made in 1855 recently turned up in the picture framing establishment of Leeds-Wallace in Ventura. In tracing the origin of the sketch we found that it had been used to illustrate the report* of the first United States scientific expedition to explore the terrain west of the coastal mountains between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The story of this expedition as it relates to Ventura County is worth summarizing. In 1853 Congress authorized the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, to explore and survey from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean to "ascertain the most practicable and economical route for a railroad". The Corps of Topographical Engineers of the Army conducted the exploration. The surveys began in 1853 and continued through 1856. A number of exploration parties were formed, each headed by an officer of the Topographical Engineers.

One segment of the route to be explored was from San Francisco to Los Angeles. Lieutenant John G. Parke was placed in charge and Mr. Albert H. Campbell, a civil engineer, was designated his assistant. Lt. Parke's orders were " . . . to make such explorations and surveys as will determine the practicability of a railroad from the Bay of San Francisco to the plains of Los Angeles by a route west of the Coast Range." Parke was instructed to gather as much geological information as possible as well as information on the botany and natural history of the country. He was authorized to employ as assistants a geologist, civil engineer, draughtsman, meteorologist and computer, as well as necessary teamsters. Supplies and equipment were to be furnished by the Army Quartermaster at Benicia Barracks, northeast of Oakland on Carquinez Strait. Parke hired his assistants and the party set sail from New York aboard the mail steamer on October 5, 1854. The party arrived in San Francisco on November 1 and proceeded to Benicia Barracks for outfitting. They left Benicia on November 20 and headed for the Pueblo of San Jose.

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*"Report of explorations for railroad routes from San Francisco Bay to Los Angeles, California, west of the Coast Range and from the Pima villages on the Gila to the Rio Grande near the 32d parallel of north latitude," by Lieutenant John G. Parke, Corps of Topographical Engineers, 1854-5. In vol. VII of U.S. War Department. *Reports of explorations and surveys to ascertain the most practicable and economical route for a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, 1853-6.* Washington, 1857.

It required almost three months for the party to work its way south as far as San Buenaventura. One reason it took so long was that none of the coastal region had ever been accurately mapped. In addition to exploring for routes suitable for a railroad, they were preparing the first accurate maps of the area. When the party reached San Buenaventura, it ascended the Ventura River a few miles and established camp. The party then attempted unsuccessfully to cross the mountains to the north into the Cuyama. Heavy snow and the extremely rugged mountains held them back. It was during the stay on the Ventura River (February 1855) that Albert H. Campbell climbed the lower reaches of what is now called Dennison Grade, east of Ojai, and sketched the mountains and the valley to the north and west. A photograph taken in November 1974 from nearly the same spot verifies the accuracy of Campbell's sketching.

In describing the terrain on the Rincon, Lt. Parke states that because the hills lie next to the sea travelers were compelled to regulate their movements by those of the tide, and often were obliged to wait for hours to make the passage in safety. He felt it was feasible to lay railroad tracks along the base of these hills about 30 feet above high water mark; however, it would require about 13 miles of sea wall or rip-rap to protect the road bed from being undermined and swept away by the sea. Lt. Parke took particular pains to describe the deposits of bitumen (asphalt and oil) in the local area: on the Rincon, at San Buenaventura, up the Ventura River, along Tar Creek (Santa Paula Creek) up the Santa Clara River, etc. The bitumen of the Ventura River was found 12 miles above the mission on the left bank of the river. It covered the soil there for 20 feet around and was two feet thick, oozing from crevices in the rocks. A large sulphur spring was associated with this deposit with the water registering a temperature of 64°F. Parke also told that the waters of the Santa Barbara Channel frequently were covered with a thin layer of liquid bitumen (oil) from underwater seeps. The liquid gradually thickened by evaporation and the effect of solar heat, and was washed ashore in solid masses by the tide.

Lt. Parke described the missions as follows:

> The country west of the crest of the Coast Range extending from San Francisco to San Diego was, in the year 1800, under the control of the Spanish priests, who had at that time founded sixteen mission establishments. Here were collected the Indians of the mountains, and these,

under the good management of the padres, erected spacious churches, immense suits of apartments, and long rows of quarters. Luxuries soon followed the comforts, these establishments soon became princely in their extent, the cattle and horses were counted by thousands. This excited the cupidity of the government of Mexico, and 1833, a decree was published depriving the padres of all temporal control, and giving it to commissioners. The Indians dispersed, the padres gradually retired, and from that date these mission establishments went into decay. Now they are wrecks, monuments of their pristine splendor, masses of crumbling walls, with here and there occasional evidences of design and good taste in the arrangements of parts and construction. The churches are generally in good preservation, the bells of some are still hanging. But adobe walls soon melt before the southeasters of the rainy season.

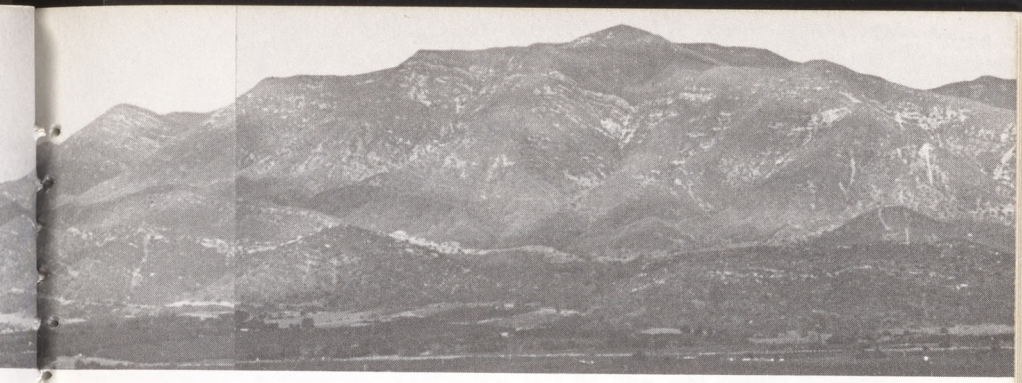
By degrees these mission lands were passing into the hands of private individuals, a state of things going on up to the time of the occupancy of this country by our troops, when the few that were left were taken possession of in the name of the general government. Claims and counter claims are now set up by individuals for this property, and while they are being adjudicated the *squatter* locates and establishes his pre-emption. The buildings are applied to various uses: a church is converted into a barrack; the padres' apartments are used for stores, smiths shops, and stables; and even, in one instance, by a retail liquor vender. Cattle and pigs roam at large in the orchards where once flourished the grape, fig, olive, peach, pear, pomegrante and orange.

After examining the country surrounding San Buenaventura, the party moved to the Santa Clara Valley: the wagons going via San Buenaventura; and others in the party crossing from the Matilihah Valley (Ojai Valley) to Tar Creek (Santa Paula Creek) and thence to the Santa Clara River. Camp was established at Rancho San Francisquito (Rancho San Francises) near the road leading from Los Angeles to the Tulare Valley. While camped at the rancho, the party spent 14 days exploring the Cuyama and determined the impracticability of a railroad route from San Francisco tō Los Angeles passing through that area. The party then moved down the Santa Clara River to the "Coast Road" and arrived in Los Angeles late in March 1855 after passing through Rancho Triumpho, Rancho Conejo and Rancho Simi. They then prepared for new explorations along the Mojave River.

White Ledge Peak

Matilija Canyon

"South end of Santa Ynez Mounta San

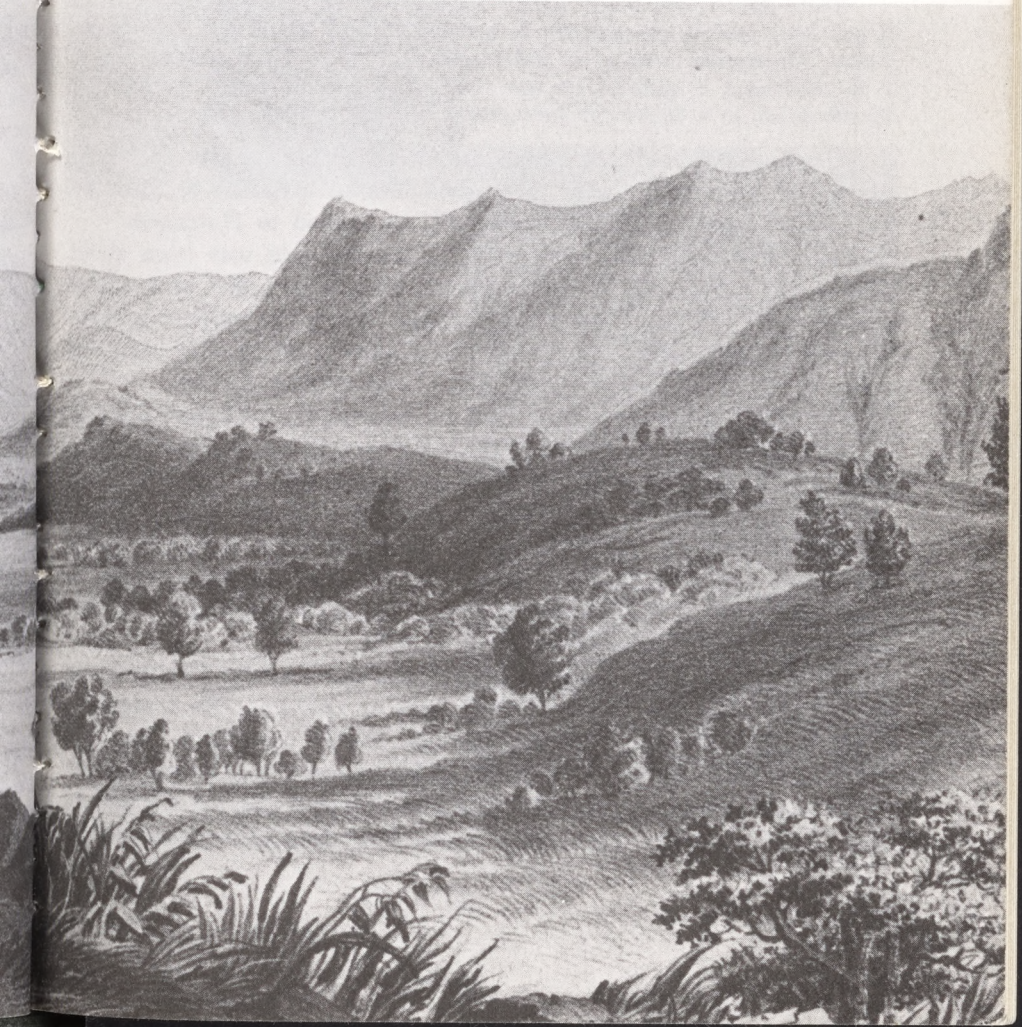


Nordhoff Ridge

Nordhoff Peak

Gridley Canyon

Mount San Buenaventura Valley—1854," by Albert H. Campbell



CHARTER MEMBERS OF THE LINCOLN COUNCIL OF FREEDOM'S DEFENDERS

By Herbert F. Ricard

During the War between the States it required courage to be a Republican in southern California where sympathy with the Confederacy was strong. In the years of Reconstruction sectional feeling ran so high that political differences were charged with bitterness. If a man were a Republican in the south, his neighbors classed him with all that was socially disreputable. The party was disguised as the Freedom's Defenders and organized under a State Council at San Francisco.

On July 14, 1868 a group of 27 Republicans established the Lincoln Council of Freedom's Defenders in Ventura. They met in secret at a little adobe just south of Hill School; and evidently had a handgrip, signs and passwords. W. S. Chaffee was President, and John Barry was Secretary.

Their charter was found among his papers after Barry's death in 1925. It had been printed appropriately in red and blue on white paper by Cubery & Co., "Ornamental Printers" at 536 Market Street in San Francisco. The 16" x 12" document is certified by two state officers and a seal. Many of the signatures are in a Spencerian hand, the script of the 19th century.

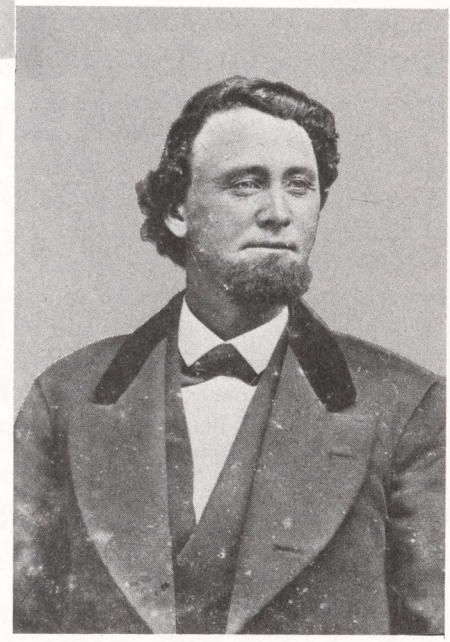
Thomas Arundell was born in Great Britain about 1820 and arrived at Ventura in 1867. He called himself a farmer in 1873 and worked as a plasterer in 1875; in 1892 he moved to Hueneme.

Samuel Barnett was probably Jr., not Sr. He was born about 1834 in New York; his father had been born about 1804 in Vermont and the two came in 1862 and are listed among the earliest arrivals. He was a Constable in 1862 and was a blacksmith in 1873, with his shop in the south side of Main Street, east of The Avenue.

William Barnett was born in New York about 1831 and brought his family to Ventura in 1862, they being among the earliest arrivals. His name appears a few times among the records of the Justice of the Peace. Barnett's saloon was decorated with the jawbone of a whale in 1871. In 1872 he signed the petition for bonds to build Hill School and gave a testimonial for Dr. Cephas Bard, signed a petition for the Ventura School District in 1873 and was a member of the Ventura Library Association in 1874.

John Andick Barry was born in Wisconsin on May 31, 1847 and gave November 1867 as his arrival date in Ventura. He joined the Lincoln Council and was immediately elected secretary. In 1871 he represented Ventura on the 4th of July Committee; he signed the petition for bonds to build Hill School and was a charter member of the IOOF in 1872. Barry was an election official, was suggested

John
Andick
Barry



Walter
Scott
Chaffee

Notation on the reverse of their charter: Pioneer Republican Club, 1868. W. S. Chaffee, President; J. A. Barry, Secretary.

Eliphalet Charles Brooks

as a candidate for sheriff and was on the first Grand Jury in 1873. During his early years here he ran a livery stable as Barry & Lucas.

Appleton Wells Beckwith was born in New York about 1825. His signature in 1868 as a member of Freedom's Defenders is the earliest record found, and is probably the year of his arrival. He was at Saticoy in 1869, and bought part of a Santa Paula ranch from J. E. Stevens in 1872. In the same year Beckwith advertised in the newspaper asking the return of a promissory note that he had lost. He was a Supervisor in 1873; and he registered his brand and earmark the following year. He died February 3, 1881.

Eliphalet Charles Brooks was born in Maine about 1834, and probably arrived here in 1868 when his name also appears in the records of the Justice of the Peace. He gave aid in the construction of the Presbyterian Church about 1869. By 1872 he signed the petition for bonds to build Hill School and ran a livery stable. In 1873 he was serving on the first Grand Jury and worked as a carriage maker. Brooks installed a hay scale in the same year.

Walter Scott Chaffee was born in New York in 1834 and arrived at Ventura about 1860 or '61, where he married Rebecca Nidever, a sister of John Nidever. He opened a store with Griffin Robbins in 1862 as the first American merchants; over the years he had numerous

partners including Gilbert, Bonestel and McKeeby. Chaffee was an election official in 1866. The Presbyterian Church Trustees met at his home in 1869. In 1871 he was a Road Commissioner to build up the Santa Clara Valley. He signed the petition for bonds to build Hill School and was President of the Santa Ana Water Company by 1872. He was a member of the Arrangements Committee for the New Year's Ball in 1873, and on the Invitation Committee for the opening of the Ojai Hotel in 1874. He died May 2, 1894.

Lorenzo Dow Chillson was born in New York about 1830. His arrival date at Ventura has not been found, but in 1868 he was sent to Sacramento to lobby for a bill to create Ventura County. The following year he signed the petition for the county to be formed. By 1870 he was a charter member of the Masons, and had constructed the Farmers Ditch. Almonds from his orchard on Ventura Avenue were placed in the cornerstone of Hill School; and L. D. Chillson was at the gold mines in Piru in 1872. His name was suggested as a candidate for County Surveyor, and he signed a petition regarding the Ventura School District in 1873 when he also joined the Methodist Church. He married M. E. Willett in 1874, probably a sister of Jacklin Willett, the miller; and he was an officer in the Sons of Temperance in 1875.

W. D. Chillson was here by 1867 when his name appears in the records of the Justice of the Peace. He was a Notary Public in 1868, signed the petition for the creation of Ventura County in 1869 and was an attorney in 1871. W. D. Chillson was a member of the Presbyterian Church and a Trustee of the Avenue School in 1873. It is likely that he was a brother of L. D. Chillson.

The Rev. Robert Rankin Dunlop was born in Pennsylvania about 1833, and was here by 1867 when he organized the Methodist Church. He was a charter member of the Masons in 1870. Dunlop was the minister at Hueneme by 1873.

N. B. Evans was born in 1818; and arrived here by 1868 when he signed as a charter member of Freedom's Defenders; and the following year his name appears in the records of the Justice of the Peace. He died in 1869 and was buried in the town cemetery.

A. J. Fenwick was here by 1868 when he signed as a charter member of Freedom's Defenders. His name appears in the records of the Justice of the Peace in 1869; and he voted during this same year which seems somewhat peculiar as his name is not found among the registered voters.

THE STATE C

Freedom's

STATE OF

Do hereby authorize the undersigned to Establish Subo
the name of Lincoln Council, No
necessary requirements of the State Council.

San Francisco, July 14th A. D. 1868.

CHARTER ME

W. L. Chaffee
W. D. Hobart
W. L. Chilson
S. S. Phillips
J. T. Barry
Ygnacio Coronel

L. L. Chilson
P. R. Stone
H. F. Hubbard
A. Warrington
Wm Garnett
Geo S. Gilbert
Geo. Gilbert Jr
Morgan Wagner
E. C. Brooks
N. B. Evans

Cubery & Co., Ornamental Printers.

COUNCIL OF

Defenders.

CALIFORNIA,

Subordinate Council, to be known and styled by
No. ..., of F. D., they having complied with the

A Coy 22. *President.*

Fred H Elliott *Secretary pro tem*

MEMBERS.

R. K. Dunlop
James H. Wright
N. J. Fenwick
H. W. Stevens
Henry Speer
Samuel Barnett Jr.
A. W. Beckwith
Thos. Arundell
J. C. Stevens
H. P. Flint
W. F. Swan

Henry Pinney Flint was born in Illinois in 1833 and arrived here in May 1863. He was an election official in 1866; and his name appears in the records of the Justice of the Peace for several years and on the petition for Ventura County in 1869. Flint was a member of the Presbyterian Church in 1870 and aided in its building. He was one of the founders of Hueneme the same year, where he had a store. He was a Staff Officer at the 4th of July Celebration in 1871. Flint married Catherine Collins in 1872; they were called Kate and Harry; and they had children in 1872, 1874 and 1877. He gave his occupation as sheep raiser. He died July 18, 1921.

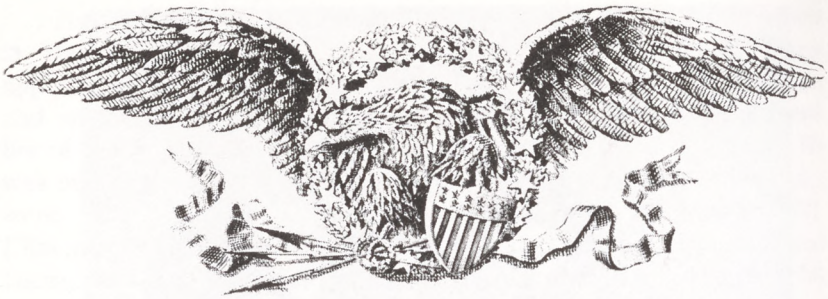
George Shoobridge Gilbert, Sr. was born in England about 1822, arrived in Ventura in 1860 with his family and is on the list of earliest arrivals. He had married Rachel Humphries in 1859 and they had four children by 1875; another was born in 1876. He had an oil refinery in the Ojai in 1861 for which he was arrested in 1863 for lack of a license to manufacture kerosene. He kept store with various partners including Chaffee, Barnard, Flint and his son, George S. Gilbert, Jr. He was a member of the Grand Jury in 1868, and a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in 1869. In the early 1870's Gilbert, Sr. was one of the founders of Hueneme. He signed the petition for school bonds in 1872, and was a guest at the opening of the Ojai Hotel in 1874. He died October 2, 1891 and was buried in the town cemetery.

George Shoobridge Gilbert, Jr. was born in New York about 1848 and was a partner in his father's store by 1867. He joined the Masons in 1871, signed a petition regarding the Ventura School District and was suggested as a candidate for County Clerk in 1873. He was a member of the Ventura Library Association and was on the Committee of Arrangements for the opening of the Ojai Hotel in 1874.

Andrew Jackson Harrington was born in New York about 1833. He was an early arrival in Ventura, with the year stated as between 1858 and 1861 although he gave it as 1863. His name appears frequently in the records of the Justice of the Peace from 1863 to 1870. In the early years he ran Dr. M.A.R. de Poli's grist mill and by 1867 he listed his occupation as *ranchero* at Saticoy. Jack Harrington is usually thought of as a blacksmith, or as the leader of the parades as he marched at its head stretching out his six feet one and a half inches. He gave aid in building the Presbyterian Church in 1870 and he signed the petition for bonds to build Hill School in 1872. He purchased a lot in the town cemetery in 1890, but died in Bakersfield about 1917.

Kate and Harry Flint re-enact their wedding party

William Dewey Hobson was born in Illinois in 1829, married in 1851 to Isabel Jane Winemiller and arrived in Ventura in 1856. About 1859 he was on the Grand Jury, had a son buried that year and was one of the nine Americans who voted. He was Justice of the Peace several times beginning in 1863; and was an election official in 1866. He drafted the by-laws of a committee to build the earliest wharf here in 1871 and was Secretary of the town council the same year. Hobson was a contractor and he built Hill School and the first Courthouse. His greatest contribution was going to the legislature in 1872 to lobby for the passage of the bill that would



Republican mural

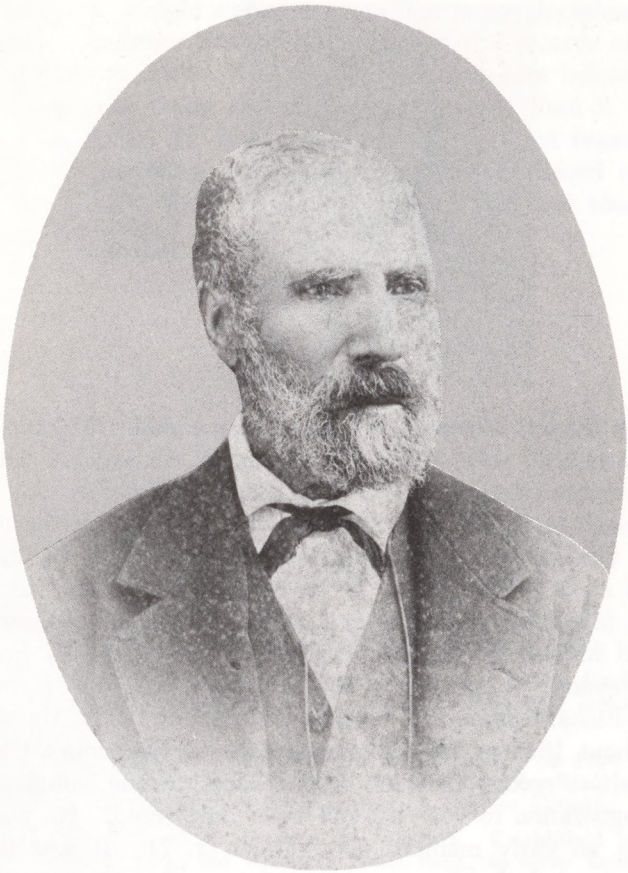
create Ventura County. For this he is called the Father of Ventura County. He died August 23, 1915 and was buried in the town cemetery.

Aristarchus Francis Hubbard was born in New York about 1832. He probably arrived in Ventura in 1868 when he became a member of Freedom's Defenders, and his name appeared in the records of the Justice of the Peace. He was a Steward of the Methodist Church in 1870. Hubbard was interested in education, being Clerk of the School Board in 1870 and School Trustee in 1871; and he signed a petition for school bonds in 1872. He gave his occupation as farmer in 1875.

Ysidro Obiols was born in Spain about 1821 and arrived in Ventura in 1853, where he purchased land the following year. He was the representative of Township No. 1 in 1857 and was a hotel keeper in 1860. Through the 1860's his name appeared in the records of the Justice Court while he was Deputy County Clerk, Justice of the Peace and an election official. Obiols gave aid in building the Presbyterian Church in 1871; and he signed the petition for school bonds in 1872 and was a Trustee in 1873. By 1875 he considered himself a farmer with his acreage on The Avenue.

Dr. Seth S. Phillips was born in New York about 1838 and is presumed to have arrived here about 1868 as this is the earliest record that has been found. He signed the petition for the creation of Ventura County in 1869. Phillips was unmarried at the time of his death, June 11, 1871, from the accidental discharge of a pistol in his own hands.

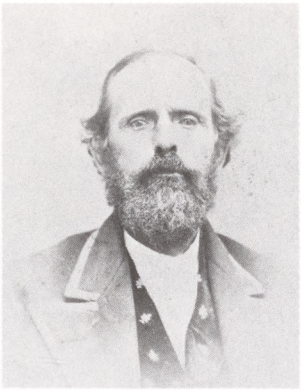
Henry Spear was born in Massachusetts about 1833 and arrived in 1865. He signed the petition to create Ventura County in 1869 and was a charter member of the Masons in 1870. Spear built the



Ysidro Obiols

second brick house in Ventura; but is best known for his saloon with a hall upstairs used by many groups for meetings, including the officials of the new county until the first Court House was built. He signed the petition for bonds for Hill School in 1872. He died February 16, 1883.

John Wesley Stevens was born in New York about 1836 and was here in 1865 when his name appears in the records of the Justice of the Peace. He signed the petition for bonds for Hill School in 1872. J. W. Stevens was Constable several times following 1868, and frequently a saloonkeeper and carpenter. His earmark and brand were registered in 1873.



Colonel Joseph Everett Stevens

Joseph Everett Stevens was born in Maine about 1820 and arrived in Ventura in 1867 with Abner Haines and W. G. Adams. He was a charter member of the Masons, and aided in building the Presbyterian Church in 1870. J. E. Stevens was a delegate to the Republican Joint Convention and an election official at Santa Paula, when he settled on a Saticoy farm. It was reported that he had a corn-planter in 1871, and was listed as a stockholder in the Farmers Canal and called himself a farmer in 1873. He was generally known as Colonel Stevens.

John Richard Stone was born in Ohio about 1833. He probably arrived about 1868 as his membership in the Freedom's Defenders is the earliest record that has been found. Stone voted in 1869, but his registration to vote has not been discovered. He joined the Masons as an early member about 1870 or '71. It was probably about this period that he was married to a daughter of Benjamin Foxen. He signed the petition for bonds for Hill School in 1872; and was floor manager of the New Year's Ball in 1872 and 1873 and the Ojai hotel opening in 1874. He was a harness maker and sheriff.

N. P. Swan was a charter member of Freedom's Defenders in 1868. Except for his signature and that he voted in 1869, nothing is known about this man. Again no record has beeen found of his voter registration.

Myron Warner was born in Massachusetts about 1837, and arrived in Ventura in 1863 when he purchased land, and his name appeared in the records of the Justice of the Peace. Warner signed the petition for the creation of Ventura County in 1869 and was a member of the Ventura Library Association in 1877. He listed his occupation as sea captain in 1883.

James H. Wright signed a name that is not deciphered with any certainty. A James Wright was found in the records of the Justice of the Peace in 1866. This would have him here before 1868 when the charter was being signed. Another writer than S. N. Sheridan reads it as James H. Wight, a name that has not been found elsewhere. A possibility is John Wyeth, who purchased two-thirds of the Ojai Rancho from Bartlett in 1865. The real identity of this signer is unknown.

Half a Century of Service

County Stationers, Inc., 532 E. Main, Ventura. Successor to John J. MacGregor. Since 1898 Ventura County's complete stationer and office furniture dealer.

Janss Foundation. The company began its first real estate development activities in 1889. Operations were moved to the Conejo Valley in 1954 with offices in Thousand Oaks and Newbury Park.

Bank of A. Levy, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception the Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

Noyes Plumbing Co., 1718 E. Main St., Ventura. Established by Bert Wigton and Joseph Noyes in 1924 in the old Hamilton Hotel Bldg., to serve Ventura County.

Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.

Safeco Title Insurance Company. Successor to Security Title Co., has been insuring title to California properties since 1920 and headquartered in Ventura since 1959.

Santa Barbara Savings and Loan Association, organized September 21, 1887, was the first savings and loan association established in the city of Ventura. The Ventura branch office was opened in June 1944 with H. R. Holst as manager and Janet Walker as assistant and later moved to its present location at 92 South Chestnut Street.

Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association. Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

Vetco, Inc, 250 W. Stanley Ave., Ventura, started as Ventura Tool Co. in 1923 and has expanded from two men to over 2500 employees. Fritz Huntsinger is Chairman of the Board of Directors.

MEMBERSHIP

LIFE

Dr. Philip Bard
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Borchard
Mr. and Mrs. Milton C. Borchard
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VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Vol. XXII, No. 4 Summer 1977

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Ventura County Historical Society
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Grant W. Heil, Editor

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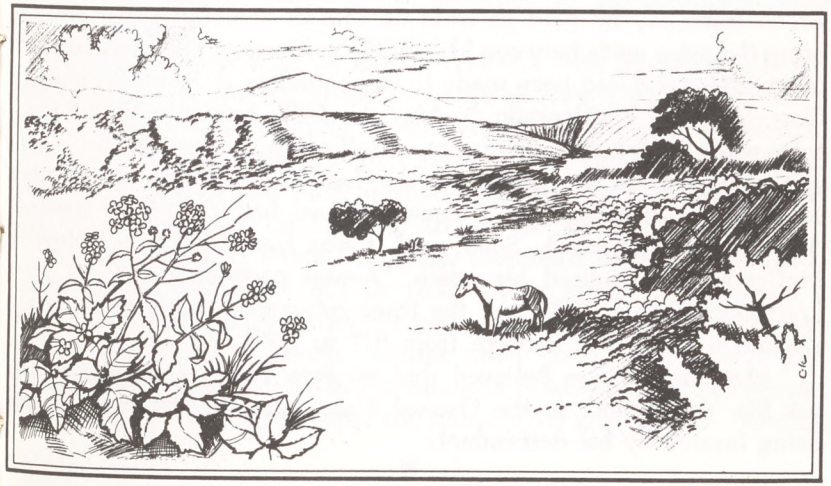
Notice

The article is a revised edition, © 1977, by Yvonne G. Bodle of her book. She is married to Michael E. Bodle, great-grandson of Dominick McGrath, and is an instructor at Ventura College. Mrs. Bodle gathered the photographs from the McGrath family; the drawings are by Mike Cole.



THE McGRATH STORY

By Yvonne G. Bodle

THE OXNARD PLAIN: THE LAND

The arrival of Dominick McGrath, his wife and children in 1874 was the beginning of the McGrath family of Oxnard that has been prominently identified with the farming and landholding interests of Ventura County. Dominick was one of the first settlers and citizens of the Santa Clara Valley, being a pioneer rancher, sheepman and landowner.

Dominick's original land purchase in the Oxnard area was located near West Gonzales Road which runs parallel to the Santa Clara River. It was part of a land grant, El Rio de Santa Clara ó La Colonia. Dominick was impressed by the abundance and size of the tall wild mustard growing in the fields, feeling that the Santa Clara Valley must be fertile to grow such a cover. Because of this and the fact that the site for his future home was situated near the sea, a lake and trees, he was persuaded to purchase the land for which some say he paid as little as 75¢ an acre but other sources bring the price up to between $10 and $15 an acre. The original grant of 44,883.3 acres had been made to eight soldiers of Santa Barbara by Governor Juan B. Alvarado on May 22, 1837; but only Rafael Gonzales was to ranch it to any extent. Half of the interest in La Colonia was sold prior to the patent by the Land Commission on October 18, 1864. A decade later Thomas R. Bard had purchased most of the land for Thomas A. Scott; and it was from him that Dominick McGrath had acquired his ranch. Actual partioning did not start until December 5, 1875; and the three referees-in-partition increased Dominick McGrath's acreage from 877 to 1,337.

Dominick always believed that no area had the climate or the soil like that found on the Oxnard Plain. Today the ranch is still being farmed by his descendants.

McGrath Home, Ireland

DOMINICK McGRATH: IRISH IMMIGRANT

Dominick McGrath was born in Derry Shanogue, Longford County, Ireland on June 6, 1827 to Mary and Peter McGrath. Historical references list Dominick's birthdate as 1832 or 1835; but the tombstone at the Santa Clara Catholic Cemetery in Oxnard, where he is buried next to Bridget, reads June 6, 1827. As one cousin put it, "The tombstone has to be right, else they would have sent it back!" Dominick was next to the youngest in a family of six children: Andrew, Peter, John, Mary, Dominick and Ellen. The children were reared on a 200-acre farm belonging to Peter and Mary. The homestead is still being farmed by one of Dominick's grandnephews, Peter McGrath. Dominick received his education in the country schools of his native isle.

Around the age of 18 he left for America with his brother, Peter. The two of them worked in the foundries in New York and Brooklyn for six years before yielding to the urge to go West. Embarking from New York, it is thought that Peter got off somewhere in South America; family stories have it that being extremely prone to seasickness, he could not face sailing around the Horn.

Disembarking in Santa Francisco, Dominick settled in Alameda County about the year 1851 or 1852. After he had worked on a ranch in the Livermore Valley for two years he saved enough money to buy 1,000 head of sheep. Unlike other young men of his day, he did not seek his fortune in the fabulous fields of gold, but instead found it selling his mutton, wool and hides to the gold miners. During

Bridget Donlon McGrath

the dry years he took his sheep to Berkeley and saved them from the elements. Others lost theirs by taking them further inland to Nevada. "Grandfather thought the sheep would have a better chance to survive because of the heavy fog in the Berkeley Hills," recalled Mrs. James Leonard in her notes. Of interest later was that he leased his Berkeley land from James Leonard whose son married Dominick's daughter, Nellie.

Father and five older daughters:
Elizabeth, Mary, Sarah Ellen, Josephine and Margaret

Shortly after becoming a sheepman, Dominick married Bridget Donlon on August 25, 1867 in Dublin, Alameda County. She was a member of the Livermore Irish community which called their town Dublin after the city they knew in Ireland. Bridget was 22 and Dominick was 40 years of age. The priest was Father Burns, and the best man and matron of honor were David and Jane Murray. Bridget's parents were James and Mary (McCormack) Donlon. This appears to be the link between the McGraths and Donlons of Oxnard. Bridget was one of eight children: the four by James Donlon and his first wife were John, Peter, Margaret and Sister Constancia; those by his second wife were James, Kate, Bridget and Mary.

After several trips to southern California on horseback to look over the area and purchase land in the Santa Clara Valley, Dominick returned to Livermore and settled his affairs. Then with Bridget and their four little girls, he boarded a ship and sailed south, disem-

Home Ranch in the nineteenth century

barking around Santa Barbara and making the rest of the journey by wagon. The four girls were Mary Theresa (Mrs. Bernard Hanly) Margaret, Elizabeth (Mrs. Thomas McCormick) and Sarah Ellen (Mrs. James Leonard). On Dominick's previous trips he stayed on the Hope Ranch of Santa Barbara. Thomas W. Hope was from Ireland and they were good friends. A family note reads that the Hopes kept a chest of gold coins which they made available for their friends should they need assistance (an old California custom).

Dominick first moved his family into a little clapboard house on his newly acquired Oxnard ranch. In 1879 he built a two-story home with a shingle roof on a knoll near the present Harbor Boulevard-Gonzales Road intersection, 500 yards east of the present R. H. McGrath home. An insurance policy dated March 23, 1897 shows that the house was insured for $3,650. Almost a century later the building is still standing and occupied by tenants. One of Dominick's first Ventura County tax bills dated January 3, 1878 for 876 acres of the Home Ranch property, prime agriculture land, had an assessed valuation of $8,080 and the tax bill was $145.44.

Brothers and sisters: seat—Margaret McGrath, Ellen Leonard, Ann Laubacher and Elizabeth McCormick; standing—Hugo, Mary Hanly, Joe, Josephine Doud, Frank and Robert.

DOMINICK: THE PATRIARCH

Those who knew Dominick said that he had a zest for life that extended from such little things as a good meal to major things like his religion, his land and most of all, his children. The strong sense of family he felt and fostered has continued to characterize the McGraths. Bridget and Dominick (Mama and Papa as they were fondly referred to) had 14 children with only 10 reaching adulthood, six daughters and four sons: Mary, Margaret, Elizabeth, Sarah Ellen (Nellie) Josephine, James Hubert (Hugo) Joseph, Thomas Francis (Frank) Robert and Ann.

When Mama took the girls to the beach, they brought back pails pails of sand to polish the floors. Although the children married and left, Papa continued the family gatherings at the Home Ranch.

Beach picnic with Charlie Chaplin

Family group: seated—Hugo with John, Rita (Scoles) Helen (Higgins) Josephine with Margaret, Joe with Jane and Minnie Hanly; standing—Ed Laubacher with Mary, Nan Laubacher, Nellie Leonard, Maggie McGrath, Robert, Mae (Kennedy) Lizzie McCormick, Frank, unknown, Margaret Laubacher and Bill Hanly.

One of the family's greatest pleasures were the Sunday picnics which were held at the beach in their favorite oceanside grove of willows. All the children would come, and later their children (Dominick and Bridget had 50 grandchildren). The young boys were given the task of covering the sand with straw so the team of horses carrying the supplies would not get stuck. Their sisters would bring sandwiches and chicken or there would be a big Santa Maria type barbecue. The girls are also remembered for their cakes: Margaret always brought a jelly roll; Josie would bring her almond chip cake; and Nellie was famous for her angel food. They took rowboats out on McGrath Lake; remembered to this day were the swimming and games, and later on music to dance by. A frequent guest was famed comedian Charlie Chaplin.

Another tradition started by the patriarch was the Christmas gathering. At first it was an all day affair at the Home Ranch, but

Nellie, Maggie, Nan, Josie and Lizzie

later the married children began taking turns. The last gathering was at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Laubacher (youngest daughter Ann) around 1932. It was decided then that 104 people were too many to ever get under one roof again.

The McGraths were noted for their closeness, just plain enjoying each other's company. The sisters were especially fond of getting together on Sundays with their families for pot luck suppers. Sister Nellie began the Easter parties (everyone would bring a box lunch) and hosted them until the day she died. This practice was then carried on by Mr. and Mrs. James McCormick, Sr. (son of Elizabeth McGrath McCormick) and to this day by their son and daughter-in-law, Bub and Sally McCormick. Hosting the big New Year's Eve party was either Josie (Mrs. James Doud) or Nellie. Aunt Rita (Hugo's wife) was famous for her big dinners with her English entertaining finery. The hospitality of the McGrath girls was uniquely illustrated by the oldest daughter Minnie who would pour hot coffee over his hand if a guest dared to put it over his cup, signifying he had had enough.

Ann recalled that her "Father's chief characteristic was his kindness. He was very stern, though, and we all had great respect for

Josie, Maggie and Nan in mourning

him. Father was a very jolly person, too. He loved the company of young people, and young people loved him because he was so humble and sincere about everything." Dominick lived the home life of the careful farmer and always kept his family close about him. It was a congenial and happy fireside at the McGrath home. All the family had a love for music, and every evening they would congregate in the big living room and sing. Frank attempted to master the violin; he could never make it do anything but squeak and squawk however. Ann played piano by ear as a child and later took lessons; Hugo longed to hear her play and would listen by the hour.

After enjoying many years of happy, wedded life and after rearing a large family, Bridget McGrath died in 1888 at the age of 42 bearing a stillborn child. She was a devoted wife, a loving and faithful mother and a true and earnest Christian. E. M. Sheridan wrote of her, "She was a fine woman, an exemplary wife and mother and had given her children a fine start in life pointing them in the right direction."

Dominick, left with 10 children under the age of 21 and living at home, had to face the difficult task of rearing his big brood alone.

Margaret (Maggie) McGrath

With the eldest daughter Minnie soon to be married to Bernard Hanly and moving to Berkeley, the second daughter, Margaret, became a second mother to the children at the age of 19. "Maggie was very self-sacrificing," said her sister Ann who was two years old at the time of the mother's death, "She carried on where our mother left off and really made a home for us." Maggie was a seamstress too; and she stitched clothes of professional quality not only for her own brothers and sisters, but later for some of her dozens of nieces. All the daughters later married well except Maggie who remained single. Goodhearted, devoted Maggie had taken over as feminine head of her father's home. When James Leonard asked Dominick for the hand of his fourth daughter, he answered "Please take one of the others." There were two older unmarried daughters at the time!

Dominick had his own method of control over his sons who liked to go into town on Saturday nights. While they were gone, he would attach a rope to their blankets and hang the loose end out the window. If they did not get up in the morning, he would pull the rope from down below and wake them up! The boys liked to play practical jokes on their sisters. Knowing the girls loved to see the ships from Port Hueneme go by, the brothers would yell, "Hurry up and get on the roof, the ships are going by!" The girls would scurry up the attic in their long dresses only to find there were no ships at all. The scamps would get a big laugh out of this. At

Mother and four sons: Robert, Hugo, Joe and Frank

breakfast the sisters took turns making the meal. One time when it was Josie's and she was making pancakes, the boys kept asking for more and more. Josie proudly remarked, "They've never gone for my pancakes like this before." What they were doing was stacking the pancakes under the table. One of the favorite pastimes for the children was to grease the pigs and see who could stay on the longest.

Dominick's older children attended the old San Pedro School, but soon his neighbors and he decided they needed a school closer to their homes. They planned and built the old Colonia School on Gonzales Road, an Oxnard landmark attended by three generations of McGraths until it burned down. The children drove a buggy to Colonia School or rode horseback when they became older. Dominick had no higher education himself but made certain his boys did. Most of the boys went to a business college in Ventura at one time or another. Occasionally they had to swim the river on horseback to get there. Dominick began the tradition of sending his sons to St. Vincent's College in Los Angeles, now Loyola University, for their advanced education. The decision of where to send the daughters was solved when Bridget's half sister, Sister Constancia, was sta-

tioned at St. Vincent's Institution in Santa Barbara. The girls were there for a time to be trained by the Sisters of Charity except Nan who went to Old St. Mary's in Los Angeles, now St. Mary's Academy.

Dominick was known to be a cautious man in his business affairs. He was so careful a business man that he sold the same pig to A. Levy three times! Mr. Levy would buy the pig, take it to his place and each time the pig would run home; he dealt in farm products in the township of Hueneme, and later founded the Bank of A. Levy (where he did not have to deal in pigs anymore) which has been known since its inception for helping to finance many a crop or a piece of new equipment.

In politics Dominick was an independent, always selecting whom he believed to be the best man. He was known to be an outstanding citizens. He traded in San Buenaventura, that being the market place for all the residents on the south side of the Santa Clara River. Frequently the friends from that side came in groups to 'The Mission'. If Dominick McGrath was seen in town, one could be assured that Peter Donlon, James Leonard, John Scarlett and Mark McLaughlin were also to be found somewhere along Main Street. These men constituted a brotherly band; and Venturans always welcomed them and their visits, especially the merchants, as they were all liberal spenders when it came to laying in family supplies.

On one of these sojourns to the mission town, John Scarlett and James Leonard went with Dominick by horse and buggy; and on the way back he and John Scarlett got into a heated argument over a jug about religion. Mr. Scarlett was known to be an Orangeman devoted to the Church of Ireland, and Dominick of course a Roman Catholic. He pushed Scarlett out even though the river was rising and left him to manage his own way home. Crossing the Santa Clara River by wagon during the winter was a dangerous undertaking. The river could be forded as long as the wagon did not float! There were some misfortunes. Another danger was shown in 1902 when Hugo and Josie McGrath were nearly drowned when they were caught in the Santa Clara River quicksand. A sharp cut of the whip caused the horses to surge forward, cracking the singletree, but the wood held and the team managed to reach the south bank as the water washed over their backs.

Dominick was big in many ways. He stood over six feet, was broad shouldered, deep chested, and well proportioned. The most serious injury during his life occurred when he was gored in the hip

Dominick McGrath
June 6, 1827—December 23, 1908

by a bull. Daughter Maggie stayed by his side, cleaning the wound, while Nellie ran to the Scarlett Ranch about a mile away to get help. As soon as she had told Mr. and Mrs. Scarlett to summon a doctor from town, Nellie promptly fainted. This crippled Dominick somewhat; his grandson, Jimmy McCormick, can still remember him sitting on the front porch and poking all the kids with his shillelagh (a briar cane). There were always dogs about the place and sometimes raccoons. When Dominick first settled on his ranch, wild ducks were so plentiful that he could fill a spring wagon with them in an afternoon. Jimmy later operated a private duck club in the early 1950's in the river bottom area between the Home Ranch and the Scarlett Ranch; he remembers his Uncle Robert McGrath being an excellent shot with his 12-gauge Remington Pump.

Dominick came to the Oxnard Plain at a time when people thought grain could not be raised in this section of the country. But all these fertile valleys needed was the hand of toil rightly directed. Dominick McGrath played an important role in developing Ventura County into one of the most productive counties in the state. At first he raised mostly grain and hay but soon he began to experiment. He was one of the first men in this area to grow lima beans, a 'dry crop' that became a mainstay of agriculture on the Oxnard Plain. His principal crops for many years were barley and corn but at the time of his death, the chief crop had changed to limas. A major factor in the growing prosperity of ranchers like Dominick was the coming of irrigation. He soon converted to it for much of his land, producing rich harvests of row crops. The ditches and later the underground pipes that brought water to the fields transformed this land from marginal to intensively cultivated farmland, ideally suited to all truck crops. With the coming of water came lush harvests of lettuce, celery and tomatoes. The railroad came to Montalvo around 1900. Before that, the nearest point for shipping was Saugus. They hauled lemons to Santa Paula by horse drawn wagon. Chinese laborers picked them, while Hindus and Filipinos tended the row crops.

Dominick did everything a man could to assure the continued success of the agricultural enterprise he founded. He chose his land wisely; he trained his sons to be strong men of good judgement; he endowed his heirs with all the material and spiritual riches at his command. And the enduring dynasty grew larger and stronger for over a hundred years.

Robert Doud, Hubert McCormick, Mike Vujovich, Joe and Adolpho Camarillo

THE ESTATE: A TRUST AND AN INHERITANCE

Dominick died a wealthy California rancher at the age of 81 on December 23, 1908 from cancer. About five years prior to his death, he had turned over most of the active operation of his business ventures to his son, Joe. When the end did come to the father, Joe continued on with the full confidence of his brothers and sisters. Time has shown that under his management the McGrath holdings thrived. Before mechanization, the McGrath Estate Company used about 300 head of Percheron horses to till its growing acreage. Much of the soil tilled with horse-drawn plows a century ago is producing even richer yields of row crops and citrus through modern methods. From the original purchase of the Home Ranch, four of the county's largest and most lucrative agricultural enterprises developed and the McGrath holdings expanded to more than 5,000 acres of the county's prime farmland. At one time you could walk from Montalvo to Hueneme without ever leaving McGrath land. During the early years, the family owned four miles of beach front.

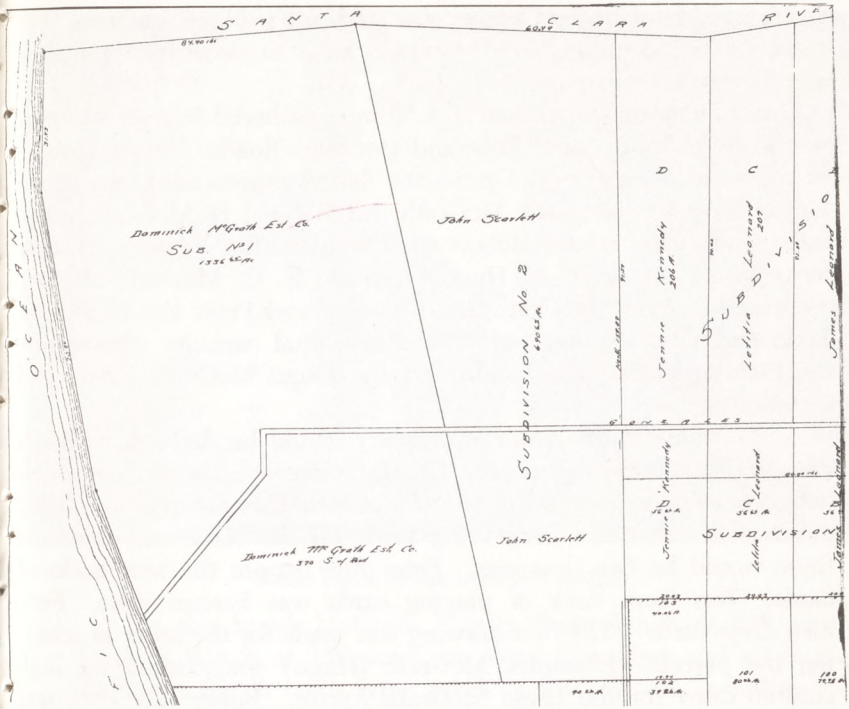
By 1940 the McGraths were milking 1,200 head of dairy cattle. They fed and housed 45 employees, most of them being Swiss milkers. It took a large staff of cooks just to keep them well fed. During World War II, the milkers went on strike and the Port Hueneme

Seabees had to be called in to milk the cows. One night while patrolling the beach, a soldier heard some rustling in the bushes. He called out, "Halt, who goes there?" No answer. Again some rustling of the bushes. He called out louder, "Halt, who goes there?" Receiving no answer, he aimed his gun at the bush and shot. A cow was dead.

Shortly before Dominick's death in 1908, he and his four sons formed and incorporated the Dominick McGrath Estate Company in 1907 to handle their rapidly expanding agricultural enterprises. The Articles of Incorporation was drawn up by Joseph Scott, the famous Los Angeles attorney who nominated President Herbert Hoover in 1928. He determined his fee to be $4,000 since there were four brothers involved. There were 4,000 original shares of capital stock issued in the Estate Company at $100 par value. The constituent members of this company were James Hubert (Hugo), Joseph, Thomas Francis (Frank) and Robert. The escrow instructions filed and signed by the president of the company in 1907 indicate that the daughters were to receive varying numbered shares of stock, a method which merely served as a device to enable the brothers to purchase them in cash from their sisters and acquire full ownership of the farming company.

After Dominick's death the several thousand acres left to his heirs were kept as an estate instead of being divided up into separate parcels. Until Hugo's death in 1946 the four McGrath brothers had operated the estate and the three survivors continued together for two more years. The original lands which Dominick had purchased included the Home Ranch (1876) the Montalvo Ranch (1900) and the Graham Ranch (1905) comprising 2,026 acres. The Estate Company later acquired the other ranches: Rose (1909) Helm (1917) Rundle (1930) Rice (1931) Hunter (1932) Scarlett (1932) and Patterson (1920's) totalling 2,994 acres. Uncle Joe was the head of the outfit, being the company president until 1948.

One of the rare instances when the retiring McGrath men made headlines occurred June 11, 1948. On that day, the fortunes of the four branches of the family hung on a cut of the cards. The event electrified the county and made news throughout the world. This Friday marked the breaking up of one of the princely baronies of Ventura County, embracing some of the most fertile lands which produced vast quantities of lima beans, walnuts, citrus fruits, and everything that was grown on the lush Oxnard Plain. The division



of land, marking the withdrawal of the James Hubert McGrath Estate and Frank McGrath from the Estate Company was made necessary by the death in November 1946 of Hugo McGrath. According to records filed in the office of the County Clerk, the stock of the Hugo McGrath Estate was appraised at $605,780 net value. This would have made the stock in the entire estate worth $2,423,120 at the time. Division of the Estate was probably inevitable. Dominick's grandsons were returning from World War II service and wanted to get into the family business. Hugo's heirs and their Uncle Frank wanted to go their separate ways.

But the method chosen to determine who would get what was unique. Joe McGrath divided the estate holdings into four equal parcels, based on land and production values of the time. The other heirs examined the division and approved it. They then left it to their attorneys, W. Mark Durley and Peter Fox, to find a way of making the actual division. The division was set to occur at a meeting on June 11, 1948; and as the date approached, tension rippled and mounted throughout the families. "It was a trying though exciting

time," said Mrs. Charles Conway, one of Hugo's three daughters, "We knew that some of the families would have to move out of homes they'd lived in for years."

At 10 a.m. on the chosen day 10 men gathered in a small office on the Rose Ranch, now Rose and Gonzales Roads: Joseph, Robert, Frank and Dominick McGrath, the latter representing the Hugo McGrath estate; Joseph D. McGrath, Jr.; William H. McGrath, office manager for the estate; Robert M. Sheridan, the Ventura attorney representing the estate of Hugo McGrath; E. C. Maxwell, attorney representing Frank McGrath; Mark Durley and Peter Fox of Durley, Todd and Fox, attorneys who were in a dual capacity representing the Dominick McGrath Estate and the Hugo McGrath Estate and Corporation.

"We didn't know how the property would be divided, we'd left that to the attorneys," recalls Charles Conway, Hugo's son-in-law who has helped manage the Hugo McGrath Estate for years. They put two sealed decks of playing cards on the table and said that there would be two drawings. Peter Fox bought the new decks of cards. The fresh deck of playing cards was broken open. Four men drew cards. The first drawing was made for the order in selecting the parcels. Dominick McGrath (Hugo's son) turned the high card to draw for the Hugo McGrath Estate. Robert McGrath was second, Frank McGrath third and Joe McGrath fourth. The strain became almost unbearable, not only for those present but for the many family members at home awaiting the outcome. The brothers were calm although the attorneys in the room reported the scene was tense and dramatic in the extreme. All was conducted with the utmost of good will. Then in the order thus decided, they drew from four cards, each representing the parcels of lands. And that was how the Dominick McGrath Estate was divided in just a few fleeting moments. They had the deeds all ready with only the names left to be filled in. As soon as they were signed, Peter Fox rushed to the courthouse to record them.

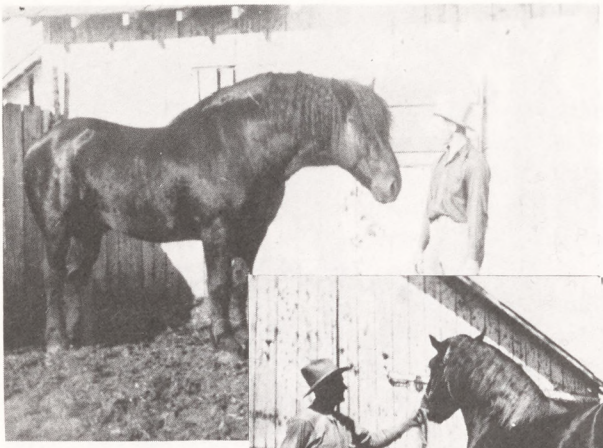
To the Hugo McGrath Estate: the Home Ranch of 1,438 acres on West Gonzales Road, including 840 acres of river bottom land and beach; and the Hunter Ranch of 265 acres. The Home Ranch is the one on which two producing oil wells were brought in by the Standard Oil Company. But the oil and mineral rights on all of the lands were divided equally in four parts so that each would share and share alike in royalties, present and future.

Home Ranch in the twentieth century

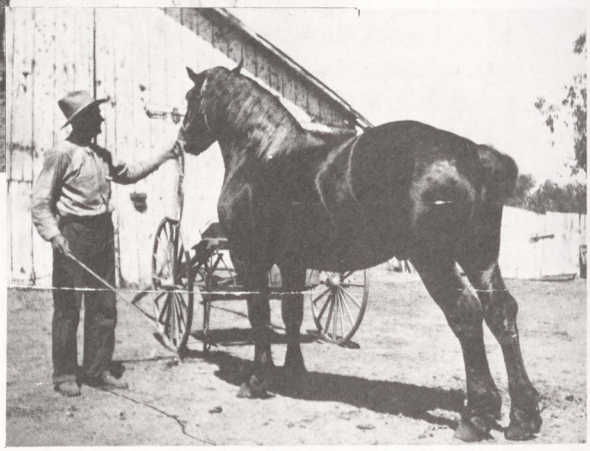
To the Frank McGrath Estate: Rose Ranch of 248 acres; Graham Ranch of 152 acres (on West Gonzales) and all of the Patterson Ranch lands lying south of Fifth Street, including the frontage on the Pacific Ocean.

Remaining in the Estate to be operated by Joseph and Robert: Montalvo Ranch of 436 acres (immediately adjoining Ivy Lawn Cemetery on the west) Rice Ranch of 198 acres, Helm Ranch of 160 acres, Rundle Ranch of 105 acres, Scarlett Ranch of 367 acres and the portion of the Patterson Ranch north of Fifth Street.

A 5,020 acre empire had been divided in minutes, but the changes the division made necessary took more than a year. Joe and Robert McGrath, who drew only for the Estate Company chose to continue to operate it. The Hugo McGrath Estate and Frank McGrath turned in their stock which was cancelled after the division of lands. Still to be divided were the cattle, horses and pigs on all of the ranches. Only the Robert McGrath family got to keep the home it had always had. Hugo McGrath's widow, Aunt Rita, moved into town so that the Joseph McGrath family could take over the Montalvo Ranch. They in turn, gave up their long-time home on the Rose Ranch; that property now belonged to Frank McGrath. And Frank, who had lived on the Home Ranch for many years, had to give that up because it now belonged to the Hugo McGrath Estate.



Percheron: crested neck of a post horse



Percheron: muscle build of a draft horse

On October 14, 1948 a huge cattle auction was held at the McGrath Ranch. What livestock the brothers could not use and had not gone in private sales was sold to the highest bidder at a public auction. Involved in the sale attended by dairy men from all over California were 822 Holsteins and Guernseys, including 21 registered bulls, and 700 feeder pigs. The cattle were led two at a time into a 12x25 foot sawdust filled corral in a large barn in which bleachers had been erected at two sides and one end. Auctioneer Bob Stanley at the opposite end of the barn knocked down each pair of cows after another auctioneer, Bob McCune, read off their histories. Tony Kamstra, independent dairyman in the Los Angeles area, was the first buyer, bidding $600 for two Holsteins. Adohr Lawrence Farmer, the top registered bull, brought $690 from Pete Broba of Chino. Cows averaged close to $300 and heifers close to $200.

At the close of the two day sale of dairy stock the ranch's 30 prize Percheron horses were brought into the sale ring. Bidders had paid more than $225,000 for the dairy cattle. But as the big

Joseph Dominick McGrath

broad-backed draft horses stood quietly, there was scarcely a bid; and then only at fractions of the cattle prices. Joe McGrath halted the auctioneer before his hammer could fall on the sale of a single horse. "It was apparent from the bidding that these horses were being sought for horse meat rather than draft purposes, and the family will not permit that kind of a sale," declared Joe, "For more than 30 years the ranch has bred the finest Percheron horses. The 30 remaining are all fine young stock. We will retain them and sell them at private sale and then only on assurance that they will be used for the purpose for which they were bred." This action saving the ranch horses from an end in a packing plant was another dramatic episode in events which marked the division of the sprawling agricultural empire.

Robert Frank Hugo

FOUR SONS: THE SECOND GENERATION

It was said of the four brothers that "they were the most modest men on the face of the earth. They were big, important men, yet they never tooted their own horns."

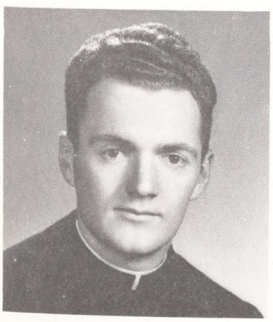
James Hubert McGrath, January 8, 1877 - November 30, 1946. Hugo attended local schools and thereafter St. Vincent's College in Los Angeles where he completed the commercial course and graduated at the age of 19. On July 22, 1908 he was married in Hermosa, California to Rita Scoles. He was known as a practical rancher and farmer. His home was noted as one of the show places of Ventura County and attracted the attention of thousands of visitors. It was recognized as a place of culture and refinement. His wife, Rita, was an English lass and admired lovely things. It was said that Hugo was much like his father, a farmer not a businessman. He liked horses, breeding, anything to do with livestock.

Joseph Dominick McGrath, July 18, 1878 - July 21, 1953. Joe attended local schools and then St. Vincent's College like his brothers. He married Mae Kennedy in Berkeley on September 20, 1911. Joseph McGrath was the first McGrath to hold a county office, becoming a member of the Board of Supervisors in 1931; Governor Young of California named Joseph to fill the Oxnard billet, succeeding A. J. Dingeman who had resigned from the board. It might be mentioned that there were several other candidates for the position, but all withdrew from the contest when the name of Joseph McGrath was put forward by Oxnard. When interviewed about his platform, he commented, "I will try to do my best. I was not looking for the job, but I am willing to assume the responsibility to do the best of my ability. I appreciate the support of the people of the community

in their efforts to have me appointed Supervisor." Joe was well liked by all, and it was known that he did not stand for any foolishness. Joseph's hobbies included hunting, riding and being around horses.

Thomas Francis McGrath, April 14, 1880 - October 25, 1954. Frank was educated in public schools and graduated from St. Vincent's College at the age of 20. He was known as "a thoroughly competent businessman and agriculturist". On June 14, 1911 in Missoula, Montana he married Helen Higgins of Eau Claire, Wisconson. Helen had come to Oxnard in 1908 for a two week visit with her aunt, Mrs. Thomas Carroll. She ended up staying for a year, and before she left was engaged to Frank. She was the matriarch of the family when she died at the age of 92. Frank, a handsome strapping Irishman, was a vigorous outdoorsman and a busy, enterprising rancher and community figure throughout his life.

Robert Henry McGrath, November 12, 1881 - November 28, 1965. Educated in much the same manner as his brothers, Rob returned to the ranch to farm. He sang in the church choir where he met his wife, Margaret Laubacher. Dominick was known to say, "Sure it's not choir practice that's taken you to town?" Rob, being the first to select a wife at the age of 25, was chastised by his older brother Joseph who said, "You can't get married; you'll put the rest of us to shame; you're the youngest." Robert, is said to have replied, "Then get out and find yourself a girl!" Rob was lively, witty, gentle and enjoyed company. His children say they never heard him curse or even raise his voice. Rob was strictly a family man, always wanting his large brood to do things together. He taught all of them to swim, and the family spent every Sunday at the beach together. The children can still remember their mother standing at the stove frying those mountains of chicken. Robert had entered the seminary in his youth to become a priest. He lasted nine days. However, his namesake and son, Robert Edward, did become a priest.



Fr. Robert
E. McGrath

Msgr. Harold
V. Laubacher

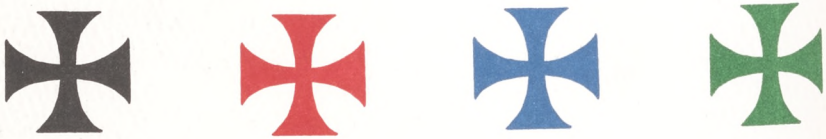
VOCATIONS: A BLESSING

Religion had always played a major role in the McGrath family. Dominick and Bridget were devoted to the Roman Catholic Church. They brought their children up to be strict adherents of that faith. Every Sunday the family went to Mass in the spring wagon. Papa would take the phaeton; and after church the youngest daughter, Ann (Aunt Nan) would get to ride home with him.

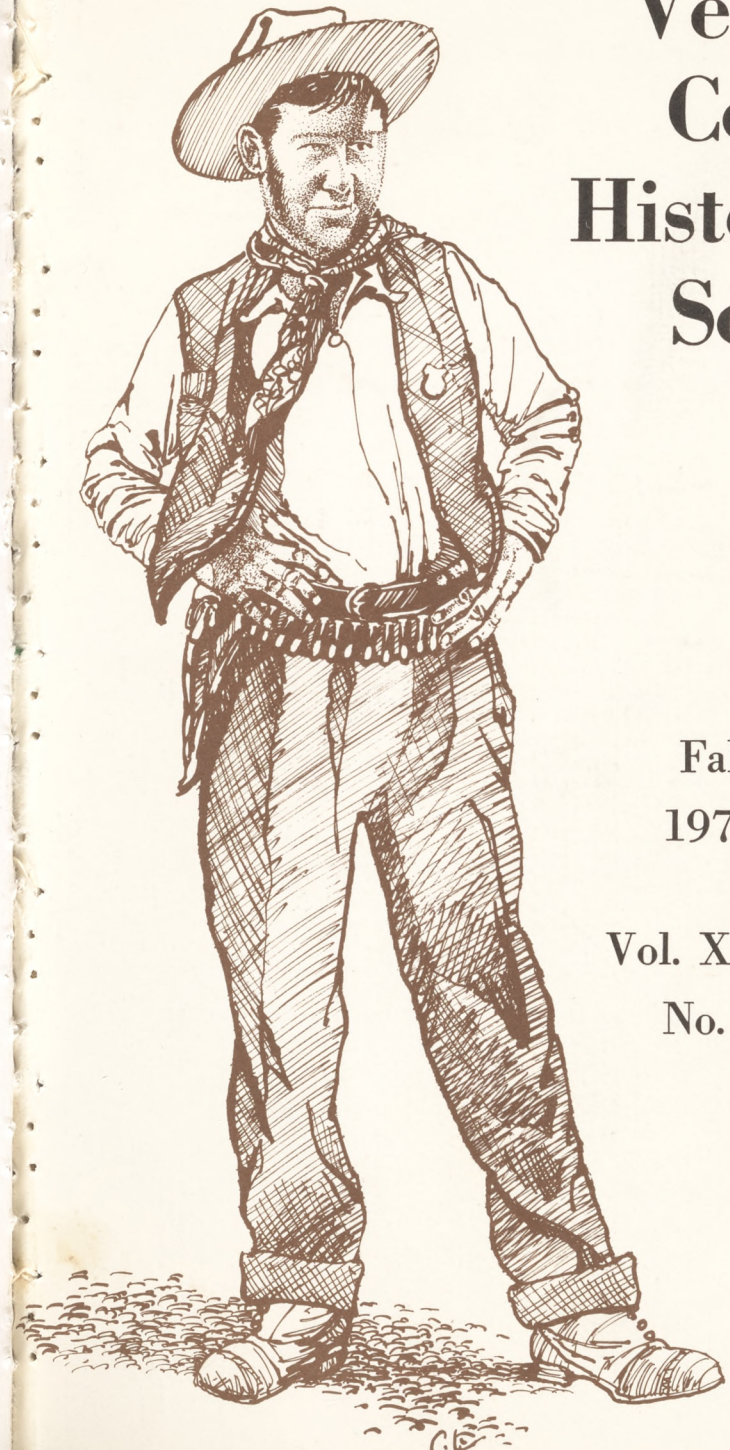
The family's tradition of devout Roman Catholicism has so far produced two priests and two nuns: Maureen Aggeler, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice 'Bud' Aggeler (Jane Leonard McGrath) entered the Religious of the Sacred Heart; and Margaret Ellen Leonard, daughter of Thomas W. Leonard and Gladys E. Wines Leonard (Beth) became a sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The Rev. Robert E. McGrath joined the Order of St. Augustine. He was the first graduate of the Villanova Preparatory School of Ojai to become a priest in the Augustinian Order. Father Robert later returned and taught at Villanova, and at the time of his death was stationed at the Augustinian Home of Studies in Camarillo, former residence of Adolpho Camarillo. Monsignor Harold V. Laubacher was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward G. Laubacher. Msgr. Laubacher, or Father Harry as he was fondly called, was pastor of St. Paul's Church in Los Angeles and had been the director of the Propagation of the Faith, Holy Child Association and Lay Mission Helpers Association from 1964 until he died on April 30, 1971.

The Santa Clara Church on Third and E Streets was planned and erected in 1903-04 under the guidance of Father Harry and the Rev. John S. Laubacher, Father Robert's late uncle and the brother of Mrs. Robert Henry McGrath and Ed Laubacher. Money was raised for the church through the combined efforts of the farmers and townspeople.



Beginning with Dominick's children, all of whom were born in the state, five generations have been native Californians. It is a handsome family with strong family bonds. Dominick and Bridget must be pleased.



Ventura County Historical Society QUARTERLY

Fall
1977

Vol. XXIII
No. 1

Wallace E. Smith
418 Bradley St.
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The
Ventura County Historical Society
Quarterly

Vol. XXIII, No. 1 Fall 1977

Grant W. Heil, Editor

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By Howard Clark Bald

Notice

From his picture on the cover to the end of the story, this issue belongs to Howard Clark Bald. The two scenic views by Bill Aplin are as Howard Bald would have seen them. The personal photographs are from his collection. And Mike Cole made the drawings from two of them.

Old Post Office

REMINISCENCES OF EARLY OJAI

by Howard Clark Bald

Much has been written over the years about leading citizens of the Ojai Valley and their contributions to the community. What I propose to do is present a picture of the everyday citizen, something of what life was like at the turn of the century and the decade that followed, and some of the industry and activities that have long been forgotten. Unfortunately, there are not many left to help me on points that have become dim in my memory. I trust, though, that there will be no more inaccuracies in my statements than there have been in ones made by people who are better qualified to be historians than I am. For instance, at the dedication of the post office a few years ago it was stated that the new building stands on the same spot it stood at the turn of the century. Another person in her memoirs stated that Ojai (Nordhoff) never had a saloon. Also the Ojai newspaper wrote an account of S. C. Gridley murdering a Basque sheepherder in the Sespe. All of which I know to be absolutely untrue. But more on those subjects later. Now it is not my purpose to start right in criticizing others, but to show how easy it is to make misstatements. I will doubtless make my share of them.

Howard Bald, age 5

Arriving in the village of Nordhoff (Ojai was Nordhoff until the time of the first World War) in the spring of 1900, I was a scrawny, squint-eyed eight year old with a supposedly short time to live because of TB. The long severe winters of northern Washington and Idaho kept me wrapped up in bed a good part of the year, so a mild climate with plenty of freedom was recommended by the doctors. Well, I took full advantage of the freedom and in that way gained a wider knowledge of what was going on than the average boy of that time.

One of the things that stands out in my memory was the Nordhoff train. It was not until I had grown up that I realized that the railroad had arrived only two years before my appearance in the Ojai Valley. Two trains plied between Los Angeles and Nordhoff. As the train left Nordhoff at 6 a.m., its sister train was leaving Los Angeles. They crossed at Moorpark where the crews had their lunches, then continued on to their respective destinations. So each train took 12 hours to make the one-way journey. One popular source of entertainment on long summer evenings for certain men, boys and dogs was to sit on the board sidewalk where the Arcade is now; and at the sound of the train whistle down near Grants Station (sometimes called Matilija Junction) all of them would take off on a trot for the depot. Near Schroff's harness shop we cut down Montgomery Street and below the lumber yard and across to Fox Street.

At the same time the Matilija's big lumbering overland stage driven by either John Ortega, Bill Olivas or Bob Clark would wheel up in a cloud of dust, followed by Wheeler Blumberg with his four white horses hitched to a four-seated buckboard. Nordhoff's taxi, which comprised a team of horses attached to a buckboard, would be there along with an assortment of country folk with a horse and buggy to meet incoming friends or family. As the train crossed south Ventura, south Montgomery and Fox Streets huffing and puffing with steam jetting from both sides and the bell clanging, there was general pandemonium for many of the country horses were terrified of such a monster and resorted to lunging, backing and rearing. Not infrequently there would be heard the snap of a buggy shaft or a wagon tongue amid the barking of dogs and shouting of women and children on the ground greeting arrivals.

When the Matilija and Wheeler Hot Springs guests were all loaded, there would be a popping of four horse whips as the stages departed through town on a dead run. In later years I have wondered just when the horses settled down to a jog trot, for certainly they could not endure such a breakneck speed for long. Finally as broken harness and buggy shafts were mended and the more terrified horses were led out across the bridge and all the passengers had departed, the boys and dogs would straggle off to their respective homes and the men go back to their visiting along the boardwalk or to Dave Raddick's pool room. I do not believe the patrons of John Lagomarsino's saloon were ever diverted from their evening's carousel by the arrival of a train.

Stage

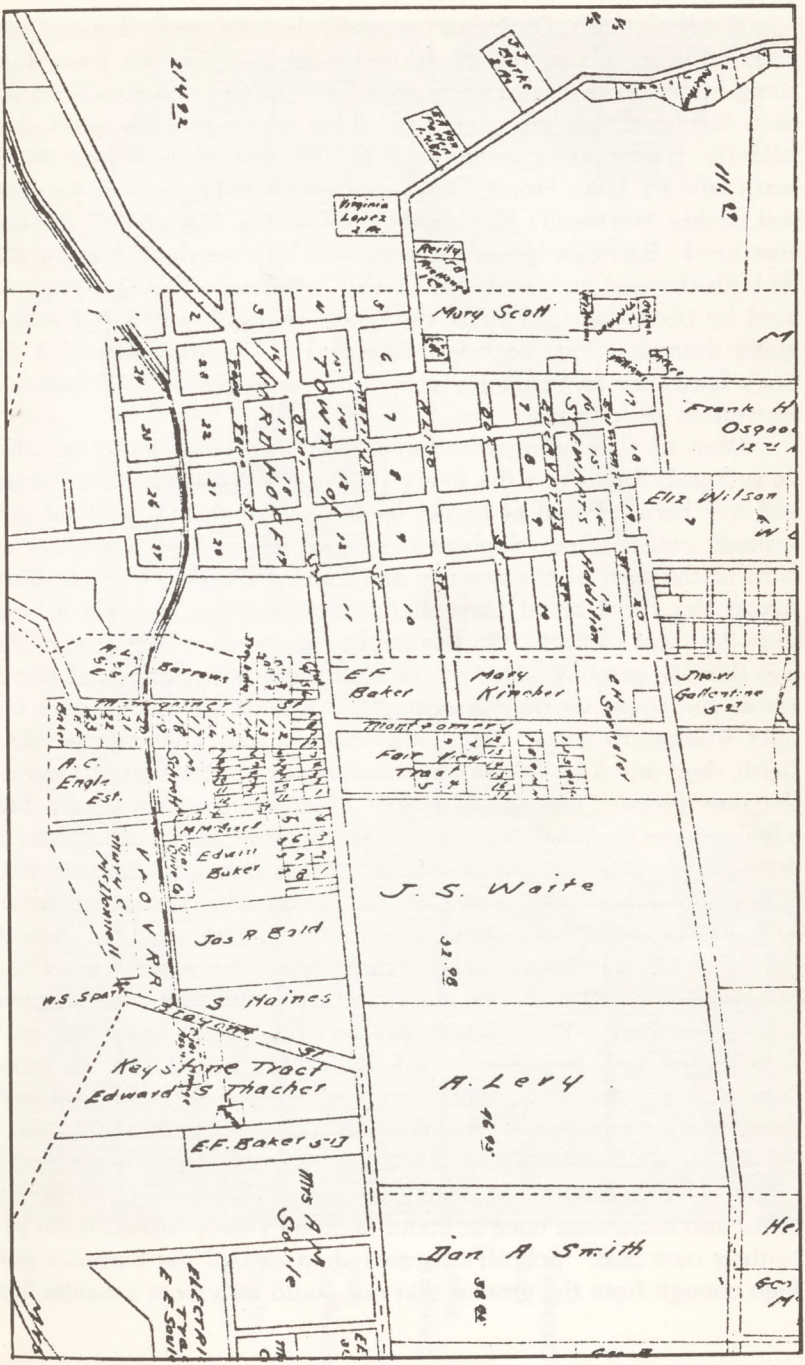
There were other incidents in connection with the 'Ojai Flier' or the 'Cannon Ball' that might be worth mentioning. One of the train crew lived with his family on Signal Street in the old two-story brick house. In the evening his three daughters would hitch their old white mare to the buggy and park them near the side door. When they heard the train whistle in the distance, one or all three would jump in the buggy and dash off to meet their daddy. One evening a daughter went out and, finding no horse and buggy waiting, decided that one of the other sisters had gone alone and thought nothing of it. When the father checked out from his 'run', he found the horse and buggy in the customary place. After looking around and finding no daughters, he drove home alone. Later it was revealed that the old white mare was seen jogging down Signal, up Main Street to Fox, and down to the depot on her own.

A few years later my young sister decided to make Peggy, our two-year old colt, acquainted with the train. Margaret was riding bareback with only a hackamore. Peggy took a pretty dim view of the hissing monster, putting on quite a scene, and at one time was in the middle of someone's buggy. But through it all Margaret stayed astride her.

One time I was sent from the livery stable with a horse and buggy to meet a domestic of the Edward Thachers' on Topa Topa ranch, coming on the train. It was winter and, of course, dark when the train came in. We soon had the old gal and her belongings loaded and were off up Ojai Avenue. By the time we turned off onto Reeves Road (it was not much more than a narrow, winding, rocky trail then and I do not believe it had a name) the poor old Scandanavian was having some misgivings as to the reliability of her escort. She could not understand why I did not drive faster. I did my best to reassure her, pointing out that the road was rocky and narrow. When we turned up McAndrew road and the horse travelled even slower, she was really convinced that I was lost. There was nothing, though, that she could do for it was pitch dark; and I do not suppose she had ever had a pair of reins in her hands. It probably was not eight o'clock when we drove into the Topa Topa yard, and Mr. and Mrs. Thacher appeared with coal oil lanterns. But that lady, I guess, considered it a harrowing experience.

Once when it was wintertime, my mother, my sister and I were going someplace by train. As we groped our way on foot from Signal to Fox Street in the dim dawn, we heard the locomotive give some sharp whistles; but we sauntered along until we discovered the train was at the Fox Street crossing. Mr. Spence, the engineer, knew we were not aboard and was waiting there for us. Mr. Spence was a kindly old gentleman and he once took me with him on the locomotive (a coal burner) to Los Angeles and back, a two-day trip with 24 hours of travel. It was one of the events of my young life (I was probably 10 then) but alas it was somewhat marred by my introduction to indoor plumbing. I had never seen or heard of anything of the kind, and the whole thing was too embarrassing for words; no one knew how I suffered. Mr. Spence doubtless thought me an unresponsive and unappreciative youngster. It was my first experience with electric lights too. In the center of each room a cord hung from the fixture in the ceiling.

Another time most of Nordhoff went to Santa Barbara to a circus. We arrived via train in Ventura at 7 a.m. and had quite a wait there for another train; but we were in Santa Barbara in time for the parade, saw the afternoon performance, then took a southbound train back to Ventura, arriving in time to catch the Ojai Flier home. I am not sure but what it had to wait for us in Ventura. Well, so much for railroading. We will next dwell on the village of Nordhoff.



Map of Nordhoff

Nordhoff (now Ojai) has generally been described as a quiet, peaceful little village, and generally it was. Several oak trees strung along Main Street from Tom Clark's livery stable to Schroff's harness shop furnished the only shade for there was no arcade until about 1918-19. There were three gaps in the row of buildings on the north side of Main Street. One was between Lagomarsino's saloon and Archie McDonell's blacksmith shop at the east end of the business block, Barrow's hardware store stood alone; there was an alley on both the east and west side of that building. The east alley was used by pedestrians. I think the board sidewalk prevented vehicles going through. But the sidewalk ended at the west corner of Barrow's hardware so that alley was quite generally used by horsemen as well as pedestrians.

West of that alley was Bray's plumbing shop, and from there on to Signal Street was the livery stable with its buggy sheds, corrals and hay barns. West of Signal on the site of the Oaks Hotel stood a small whitewashed, clapboard building where Chet Cagnacci was born at the turn of the century and later, I believe, Tommie Clark. Across the street stood Dave Raddick's residence, easterly a break, then the meat market. On the southwest corner of Signal and Main was the Ojai printing office where the theatre now stands and easterly across the street where the post office is located was Charley Gibson's blacksmith shop. There was quite a gap between the blacksmith shop and Lauch Orton's plumbing shop, the barber shop and the post office. Through that gap could be seen the Berry Villa, which is now the post office employees' parking place. C. B. Stevens' little grocery store briefly stood a little distance east of the post office, then the entrance and exit to the Ojai Inn which is now our city park. A leaky, redwood horse trough and a hitch rail extended onto the barranca. It was always shady; and buggy and saddle horses were customarily tied there while the out-of-town folk did their shopping.

I once had a Plymouth Rock hen who would bring her brood through the alley between the saloon and blacksmith shop to scratch around where the horses were tied. Sometimes she would miscalculate and be overtaken by darkness; so hen and chicks would simply fly up on a vacant spot on the hitch rail and settle down for the night. Our stable and chicken coop was just back of Dr. Hirsch's office and more than once at about bedtime I have carried them back to their own nest. Schroff's harness shop east of the barranca stood high enough from the ground that one could step from a saddle horse

Blacksmith Shop

Archie McDonell

Isaac Hudiburgh

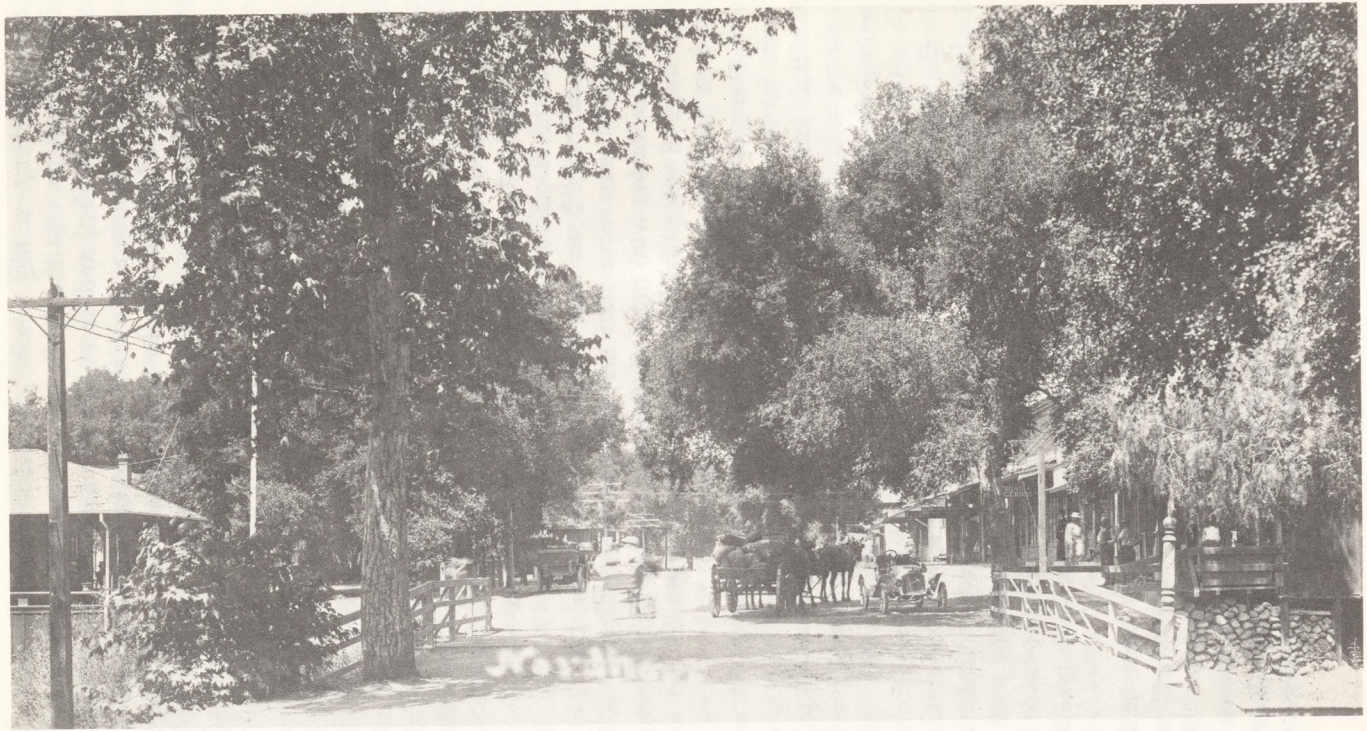
Charley Gibson

onto the porch, which was convenient for ladies riding sidesaddle to dismount and mount. The corner of south Montgomery and Main was open and was used mainly by Thacher boys to tie their horses while attending services at the Presbyterian Church which stood there. That building is now the Nazarene Church on north Montgomery and Aliso. I could go on and on and on with details of Nordhoff at the turn of the century; but I fear that would become too boring, so will get on with some of my memories of the activities of that time.

The Ojai Valley in those days was a popular winter resort for wealthy eastern people who would come out for the season. Other than playing cards and tennis, about the only entertainment was horseback riding; and for the older people, a team and surrey with a driver would trot them about the valley, up Matilija Canyon (the road ended at Wheeler's Hot Springs) up through the Upper Ojai Valley and on to Sulphur Mountain, or over to Shepherd's Inn via Casitas Pass and sometimes on to Santa Barbara. Shepherd's Inn, situated on the line between Santa Barbara and Ventura County, was a popular, rustic inn frequented by both Santa Barbara and Ojai tourists. The Casitas Pass was approached only via what is now Foster Park, and the road followed along the foot of the north side of Red Mountain. But the east and west passes were virtually the same as of today. One popular ride was to follow the beach from the Rincon to Ventura when the tide was low. I believe it was sometimes done with a team and wagon. I did it only on a saddle horse.

Having a fondness for horses, the livery stable was the center of much of my attention. I was out of school a good deal and it was handy. I could be useful there, and something was generally going on. Since horse and buggy or wagon, or saddle horse was the only means of getting about (except for walking, and a great deal of that) there was much traffic in horses, that is trading and training them.

Once, about 1903, Tom Clark went to Arizona and shipped in two carloads of unbroken horses. They were right off the range and not even halter broken. Two Spaniards were employed to break certain ones to ride. The corrals were in-between the stable and the parking lot. The bronco riders would lasso and drag a terrified, rearing and striking horse onto Main Street where he would be blindfolded, saddled and mounted in front of the livery stable. Then would fol-



At the bridge

low some very exciting scenes. Our modern rodeos were pretty mild by comparison. In the first place the animal was not saddled in a chute as at rodeo; and secondly, it was not a ten second ride but a ride to the finish, and sometimes the bronco came out the winner.

I remember one bronco in particular. He was a chestnut and far above the others in appearance. He had thrown the Spaniard twice, and he had given up trying to ride it. My father fancied the animal and struck Tom for a trade. It galled Dad when Tom told him he was not horseman enough to ride the animal, and it might hurt him; but finally a trade was made. Then for three weeks Dad kept Arizona Charley at his stable, each day grooming the horse and getting acquainted. Finally, with no one around, Dad saddled him and got aboard. The scene that followed was the talk of the village for many years after. They crossed an open lot and went through the alley west of Barrow's hardware store and east on Main Street. The more Charley bucked, the more incensed he became at being unable to dislodge Dad, and the louder he bellowed. To my everlasting disappointment I was not a witness to the affair, but many eyewitnesses for years have told me that the bronco could be heard for blocks bellowing with rage. I do not remember that Arizona Charley ever bucked after that, but he never became gentle and was finally sold in Santa Barbara for a polo pony.

Some horses of that lot were trained for driving. A very handsome Spaniard and a fine horseman named Steve Rios was employed for that job. A high seated, heavy farm wagon was used for the broncos would kick an ordinary buckboard or surrey to pieces. That animal was always hitched alongside an old steady horse. Steve would be up in the seat; two or more helpers would get the team hitched to the wagon, then hand the reins up to him. Often that process had to be done all over again with another, more substantial wagon, or repaired harness. To me the bronco riding was the most exciting, I suppose because it was beast against man, and sometimes the beast would win. Whereas with the wagon, the odds were greatly against the horse.

The livery stable was not only the site of horse trading and training; but also some boxing matches were held there, sometimes right out on the street and sometimes inside the stable. When they were held inside, buggies would be crammed into a corner to make room for the spectators. Some of the younger fry had their first lessons in boxing there. I well remember one time when the men had

Mavor Smith and me matched together. We were fairly evenly matched, and things were going smoothly until Mavor glanced over his shoulder to see how near he was to a horse's heels in a nearby stall. At that instant I uncorked a left to Mavor's jaw. Mavor considered that unfair tactics and retaliated with all he had. The riot was quelled by his father, Sam, dragging him across the street to their home in back of the post office.

Occasionally the village quietness was broken by a local hoodlum riding his horse down the boardwalk and if a Chinaman happened to be within reach, wrapping the end of his cue around the pommel of his saddle and galloping to the end of the boardwalk. (The Chinese all wore a long single braid down their back.) One smart aleck rode into Clyde Stewart's grocery store and roped a fellow and dragged him over the counter. But that episode is getting into the second decade and I am trying to confine myself to the first 10 years. And besides, that smart aleck (notice I do not now use the term hoodlum) was myself. One November night the stillness was suddenly shattered by a series of pistol shots accompanied by unearthly yells. It turned out to be only Johnny Joshlin celebrating the beginning of the fall rains. After emptying two six shooters, he returned to Lagomarsino's saloon and all was quiet again. Now I wonder how Johnny happened to have two six shooters for he was not a gunman.

The only law enforcement officer the valley had was Constable Andy Van Curen. He was a familiar sight with his flowing gray beard, riding about the valley on an iron gray horse. His home and the jail were separate buildings. I do not recall anything in the jail but spare coffins for Andy sometimes acted as undertaker. I am sure that on such occasions he substituted a team and spring wagon for the gray saddle horse. Mrs. Van Curen would prepare meals, and one of the small daughters would carry them over to the inmates.

There was a story of one of the valley's most notorious rowdies. His appearances before Justice of the Peace McKee were becoming rather frequent, and each time the fine would be a little higher. Finally, the judge fined him 10 dollars. The fellow blinked, and with a characteristic oath said, "Judge, ain't that pretty steep for a regular customer?" Another time Constable Van Curen called at his home to make an arrest. His mother met Van Curen at the front door and parleyed with him while the intended arrestee skipped

out the kitchen door, saddled and mounted a horse and rode off to the Upper Ojai where he spent some time with my uncles who were farming there.

Another well-known character of that day was a brawny, brawling Irishman named Tim Dundon. His main hobby was fighting bulldogs, and his most famous fighter was named Sharkey. About the year 1902 a fight was arranged between Sharkey and a dog named Fitz after the famous prize fighter of that time, Fitzsimmons. The fight was held on a Sunday afternoon (about the year 1902) in a secluded oak-shaded dell in the neighborhood of the Highland Estates. Fitz was from Oxnard, and most of his backers were from that town. There was an abundance of liquor and the betting was heavy. Tim engaged a horse and cart from the livery stable; and I drove him down with Sharkey between his legs. Some spectators arrived on horseback, some in buggies and some with team and wagon. I believe the Oxnard delegation arrived in Ventura via train, then rented livery horses for the rest of the journey. I remember that Tim had 65 dollars, all in gold. He gave me a five dollar gold piece to bet on Sharkey. After most everyone had gotten pretty well liquored up and the bets were placed, the fight began. Some aspects of it, such as how long the rounds were and how many were fought, are now rather dim in my memory. But each handler had a bucket of water, a sponge and towels. Sharkey was the smaller of the two dogs and got the worse of it from the start, but Sharkey was game. Some spectators tried to persuade Tim to throw in the sponge, but he refused. It looked pretty hopeless for the smaller animal. He could scarcely stand, but he fought on. I believe these dogs were called English bulls and were snow white. That is, they were white when the fight began, but soon became crimson. Just when it seemed that Sharkey could not last for another round, Fitz broke loose, turned tail and ran with Sharkey staggering bravely after him. With that Tim grabbed up his dog and claimed the bets. A near riot followed for Sharkey was a badly beaten dog, though he was willing to fight on when the larger dog quit and refused to fight. Tim stood his ground and collected his bets. Several of those present to my knowledge later became leading citizens and law enforcement officers of Ventura County.

One more little anecdote before going on to happenings of a more lawful nature. It involves the robbing of the Ojai State Bank. George Downing was a widower with two young children. He had

been a laborer on the Stetson ranch; but had left and moved to town and was working intermittently at the livery stable, mostly driving winter tourists about the valley with a team and surrey. The Ojai Bank had just two employees: the manager and cashier was Edward Wiest; Mable Isenberg was teller and bookkeeper. That noon Mr. Wiest was out to lunch and Miss Isenberg was alone when a masked man entered, displayed a gun and demanded the money. Miss Isenberg handed over quite a sum of cash, and the bandit departed. Of course the news soon spread and there was great excitement throughout the valley. That afternoon, as usual, George Downing was driving several elderly ladies from the Foothills Hotel about the valley; and naturally the bank robbery was the chief topic of conversation. At one point George revealed a six shooter and announced that he was prepared for the bandit. But Miss Isenberg had recognized George behind the mask and told only the men from the sheriff's office. For several days they kept Downing under surveillance and then one night in Raddick's pool hall, when he seemed unusually flush with cash, the officers walked in and said, "Well, George, show us the rest of it."

At the risk of this sounding like an autobiography, I will relate some of my own experiences during the century's first decade. I do admit that I took advantage of my supposed inclination to TB, and stayed away from school as much as possible. If there were any laws requiring attendance, I never heard of them.

At various times and for several reasons I attended every public school that existed in that day in the two valleys. They were the Nordhoff, San Antonio, Upper Ojai (later the High Valley Theatre) and the Matilija Schools. With the exception of the Nordhoff School they were all one room schools with one teacher teaching all eight grades. During my seventh and eighth grade years at the Matilija School (and they were never full terms) I was the only one in my class. The Matilija School stood in the narrower part of Matilija Canyon. The road from Nordhoff dropped down into the river bed from west Fairview Road and followed pretty closely along it to Matilija Hot Springs, and on to Lyon Springs.

I do not remember which year it was that J. E. Reynolds, the Ventura County School Superintendent, made a call. He was returning home by saddle horse from a visit to schools in the Lockwood and

Matilija School, 1907

standing:
Julia Sigala
Miss Thirza B. Coulter
Howard Bald
Lennie Soper
Alex Lopez

leaning:
Peter Lopez
Adela Lopez
Vances Sigala
Julia Lopez
Teresa Marroquin
Fred Sheldon
Joe Higuerra

seated:
Vicente Ramos
Ernest Lopez
Clarence Patrick
Jerome Ramos

Margaret Bald

the Cuyama Valleys. While Mr. Reynolds and Miss Coulter talked over school problems, I sat in the back of the room sweating over two arithmetic problems that he gave me. Luck was with me that day for I scored 100. Mr. Reynolds said Matilija School had the distinction of being the only school in Ventura County in which the entire class had a perfect score. That was the only academic distinction that I could ever boast of.

I may have mentioned that Matilija School stood on the east bank of the river. Water was carried up in a galvanized bucket. All drank from the one tin cup. One small, battered tin basin served for washing our hands; and naturally there was a minimum of that. There was a theory that creek water was soon purified in its flow over rocks and through sand and gravel. So there was no concern over contamination by sewage from the several resorts above. My sister's attendance at that school was of short duration. When Mother discovered some foreign objects crawling in her hair, there was something of a scene. There was one boy that Margaret was quite fond of; but following that episode, she told him she did not wish to play with him anymore, that he was lousy. Mike replied, "No, Maggie. I ain't had no louses for a month." Shortly after that Margaret returned to Nordhoff, while I continued attending Matilija regardless. Our home, Rancho Rinconada, was just midway between the two schools. (J. D. Reyes and I gave the ranch that name.)

Nordhoff School, 1903; Miss Emma Langman

Front: Hravey Stuart, Nelson Cota, Verie Chrisman, Carleton Stuart, Jack Clark, Frank Arellanes, Harold Weideman, Joe Edgerton, Dick Clark, Mavor Smith, Tommy Gibson, Milito Ortega, and Frank Witten.

Middle: Jennie Bray, Buena McLean, Dortha Clark, Evelyn Herbert, Margaret Bald, Edna Phares, , Clare Smith, Bertha Rick, Marguerite Mallory, Mary Arellanes, Lennie Wilson and Chrisman.

Back: Earl Clark, Olive Cota, Chrisman, Etta Timms, Beatrice Ortega, Nellie Bailey, Howard Bald, Jennie Miller, Josie Kimball, Mary Freeman, Lulu Schroff, Clarence Linder, Earl Chrisman, Willey Gally and Roy Kimball.

Our recess and noontime recreation was of the simplest, for we had no balls, gloves or bats; because of the rocks and brush, there was no room for such sports had such equipment been available. In the spring when chilicothe pods were bursting, one source of entertainment was to gather the seed, then rattle them in our pocketed hands while a rival tried to guess how many we had. A rough and strenuous game was called 'Shinny.' It must have been a country boy's version of hockey. The stick was Ceanothus with a curve on one end. For a ball we used a small battered tin can. One rule was to stay on the right hand side; and if one switched over, the nearest opponent was privileged to whack the offender on the shins. As I was a left hander, my shins were always badly skinned up.

My exit from Nordhoff School in 1905 was rather abrupt and final. One of the favorite recess and after school pastimes of the older boys (they were older because various ones went to school only when there was nothing else to do) was to promote fights among us younger boys. I do not remember that there was any particular animosity, but we were willing to carry out the ideas of those we looked up to. On this particular day Loren and I were engaged in a give and take fist fight when the principal appeared. We were dragged inside the school by the nape of the neck and given a never-to-be-forgotten 'hiding'. I had always been told at home that if I got into trouble at school, I would be in greater trouble at home. So for that reason I was saying nothing about what had happened until the family observed that I was having difficulty in sitting or stooping. Stripping me revealed a mass of welts from my shoulder to the calves of my legs. That time my father forgot about what he had promised me for getting into trouble at school. Incidentally the other boy was the son of the principal; and in a trustee and town meeting that followed the principal said that he had whipped his son as severely as he whipped me (which I have no doubt he did).

In 1909 when high school was opened in two rooms of the upstairs of that building, the principal was tipped off that I was an incorrigible and he must keep a close watch on me. Well, it was not many weeks until I became one of his most trusted pupils.

About 1903 or 1904 I decided that I must have a horse of my own. The livery stable had one to sell. He was not popular with the customers because he knew more than they did, particularly

Josie Kimball, Mary Freeman, Lulu Schroff, Clarence Linder, Earl Chrisman, Wiley Gaily and Roy Kimball.

when it came to setting the pace. He was middle aged, sound, gentle and good looking. The price was $25, but I had only $12. Finally my mother came forth with the balance, and we had a horse. It turned out to be quite a good investment for Charley would drive, ride and pack; and he soon admitted the fact that he was not boss. Often on weekends I would rent Charley as a pack animal to Thacher boys for Sespe camping trips. I would ride him to Thacher School on Friday afternoon and walk back to Nordhoff. Then on Sunday afternoon I would walk up to the school, a four and a half mile hike, and return with Charley. For that I would receive 50¢ per day for the rent of the horse, or $1.50.

It was always quite an occasion for Mother, Sister and me to drive to Ventura with the horse and buggy. The present highway did not exist then. The 15 mile drive down Creek Road with the numerous creek crossings took from one and a half to two hours, and the return trip from two to two and a half hours. On the beach west of the Ventura pier we unhitched Charley and tied him to the rear of the buggy with a nose bag of rolled barley while we spread a blanket on the sand and ate our lunch. Since the present direct route to Ventura did not go through until about 1917, all travel was via the Creek Road. From Nordhoff to Camp Comfort the road was much the same as it is today. But just below Camp Comfort it crossed the creek, then a mile or more beyond it recrossed the creek, finally emerging into the present highway at Arnaz between the famous old adobe and the present cider stand.

The mail was carried by four-horse stage, as was also express and other special items. Of course there was no refrigeration in those days, and ice was brought up by stage. It was said that on a hot day the stage could be trailed all the way from Ventura by the mark left on the dusty road by the melting ice. I think it was about 1907 that Fred Houk's father put in an ice plant.

There would be times in the winter when the stage would be held up for days because of high water. I think it was the winter of 1905-06 that the mail was delayed for three weeks. It was that winter that Herb Lamb was the stage driver (Margaret Reimer's father had the mail franchise then) and on one trip Lamb had his wife and infant among the passengers when the stage turned over in a creek crossing. The infant was swept away and never found. There were other drownings in the streams in those days. I believe it was 1914 that a group of men over in Santa Ana (among them John Selby and

Old Creek Road

Dr. Homer performed hernia operation on Ann Davis in 1948

Gird Percy) rode on horseback to the Matilija River, crossing below Arnaz. One of the group ventured in, was swept away and never found.

I do not remember what year it was that Bob Clark was living on the west side of the river and was stormed in when a baby was due. He had one saddle horse, Dick, that he would take a chance on. The horse got him across the river at what is now Casitas Springs. (We called it Stoney Flat in those days.) He took a team of horses and wagon from there, drove to Ventura and returned with Dr. Homer. There was no telephone communication in those days. Old Dick carried the two back across the river. I believe Dr. Homer stayed three days before the baby was delivered. Bob Clark had quite a reputation in those days for crossing roaring streams when no one else would venture in. There was one famous occasion about 1888 when he took a young lady and her trousseau over Sulphur Mountain with saddle and pack horses to Ventura where she took a steamer to San Francisco. That young lady was Bessie Thacher, the aunt of Anson and Elizabeth Thacher (presumably she rode sidewise).

The valley had its highway tragedies in those days too, only they did not involve automobiles, but horses. Captain Gillette (who lived where Dr. Rupp's office now is) was killed someplace near the present Country Club. Judge Hines went over a precipice near Topa Topa ranch with a team and buggy. Mrs. William McGuire of the Upper Ojai was thrown from a horse and killed on Ojai Avenue. Chino Lopez placed a coal oil lantern under the buggy robe to keep warm (he was blind); the buggy went off the grade in Matilija Canyon and he burned to death. A Thacher school boy was thrown from his horse and dragged to death. A Gibson boy, whose family were Upper Ojai ranchers, was crushed by a falling horse. Then some time later the father was thrown from his buggy in a runaway and killed.

That brings to mind an experience of mine two years after Mr. Gibson was killed. Two of my uncles, Will and Tom, were farming that Gibson ranch located where Carl Hofmeister now lives. They were busy harvesting their grain and no adult was available to go to Nordhoff after supplies. So at nine years of age I was sent with the same horse that had run away with Mr. Gibson when he was killed. Uncle Tom hitched her to a buggy and had me stand back of the seat and drive. The idea being that if the horse began to kick or run, I could jump out and let her go. To me that was too humiliat-

Mrs. Catherine Bald, 1912

ing for words. I said nothing though; but as soon as I was out of sight, I climbed into the seat and drove proudly into the village. Then on my return I climbed back of the seat again and drove humbly into the yard in the same position as I left.

That was probably the beginning of my deceptive acts, for soon after that my father became a forest ranger and his work took him away from home for days or weeks at a time. He often had young horses that he was training which he would leave in my care. There would be lengthy instructions on handling the particular animal, and always the last thing he would say was, "Now, young man, keep off that horse. It isn't safe for you to ride!" Almost invariably (I do not say invariably for I never tried to ride Arizona Charley) I would get on the animal and go some place. Often I was told on, but it was not by my mother. She was always a good sport. One time in particular someone squealed; and Dad came home prepared to lead me to the woodshed. But I was too badly done up to hobble out for a whipping. I had taken a colt that I was told not to ride, raced with another boy and had a bad spill.

There is scarcely a mile of road of the Ojai Valley that I could not recount an accident of some sort that involved horses. However none would compare with the collision Dad had with Wheeler Blumberg. It was Christmas eve of 1903. Dad rode a wild horse on

a dead run east on Main Street (there were no street lights then!) Midway he met Wheeler Blumberg with a team and two-seated surrey on his way from the train with some guests. Wheeler was famous for his fast driving, and after 6 p.m. in the winter it was pitch dark. They collided head on. The bronc went down and under the surrey. Dad catipulted into the front seat between Wheeler and his passenger (Miss Frances Harrow, a Los Angeles high school teacher). Wheeler's team kept right on going at full speed through the village, leaving the surrey and its occupants in the middle of the street. For a time the surrey did some unusual heaving when the bronco decided he wanted to get up. The scene that ensued on Dad's returning home is still very vivid to me. Mother went into a panic and fled at first sight of his gory face. Dad picked up the coal oil lamp and followed her from room to room, trying to tell her he was hurt. In the meantime someone had sent for Dr. Saeger who soon arrived on foot. Mother finally calmed down sufficiently to hold the lamp while Dr. Saeger sewed up a gash on one cheek; my sister stood by with a tin basin of warm water, and I stabled the horse.

About the middle of that first decade an occasional automobile would appear. Naturally there was some friction between auto drivers and horsemen. Generally the motorists were quite understanding and would often pull to the side of the road, shut off the motor and even lead the fractious horse past the auto. One farmer had quite a smash-up. The motorist went to his assistance and did everything possible to straighten things out, but the irate farmer was not satisfied and insisted on fighting. The motorist backed off, saying, "You don't know me." The farmer did not care who he was and kept advancing and swinging. Finally the motorist struck one blow and the farmer went down in a heap. That motorist was Joe Rivers, a world famous prize fighter of the day, who was training at Wheeler's Hot Springs. He fought several battles with Ad Wolgart who held the crown, but did not make it.

The Pierponts were among the first people to have an auto. Phil and Austin came bowling down Ojai Avenue looking neither right nor left. Fred Houk and I were riding up on horseback, and our horses shied off the road at their approach. I do not think we were inconvenienced much but we were incensed at being run off the road by those "stuck up so-and-so's". We turned about and galloped into

town, vowing to show them a thing or two, but were doubtless relieved on arriving to find that they had not stopped and were probably headed for Ventura. Phil, Austin and I have had some good laughs over it.

I can not refrain from relating one more horse-auto episode, even though it occurred in the middle of the second decade, and I am trying to confine myself to the first. I had bought a rather attractive colt for a very few dollars because of her questionable character. After several months of training and a little expense, she had become quite a docile animal; and I had an interested buyer who offered a substantial sum of money considering what I had paid for her. Before the deal was closed, I was riding up the Upper Ojai grade with a young lady when an auto crowded us into the bank and rammed into my colt. She developed an everlasting fear of the chugging monsters, and as a result ruined my sale.

At that time Earl Stanley Gardner was practicing law in Ventura. We had been on several fishing and hunting expeditions in the Sespe and Pine Mountain country, and had become quite friendly. When he heard of the incident which was months later, he said, "Let's sue them." The defendant was the Bartlett Music Company. The trial that followed was one of the best comedies that was ever staged in Nordhoff. Court was held in the rear of an office, and Judge Wilson was on the bench. At times he was practically on the floor from laughter. The defense had gone to a great deal of expense and time, procuring evidence and witnesses to prove that the animal was a confirmed outlaw, that I was reputed to be the best rider in the country, that at one time I was unable to ride her, and that I only paid $37.00 for her. All of which was untrue. My witnesses were winter tourists at the Foothills Hotel and Pierpont Cottages, who volunteered their services. All of the defense witnesses' testimony was really a help to me; and for the sake of brevity I will eliminate details, but Judge Wilson decided in my favor. Gardner would take no pay from me. He just wanted the satisfaction of beating Earl Moss who was a young Ventura lawyer and not to be taken lightly. The Ventura newspaper gave the country boy quite a panning for trying to hog the road with old Dobbin.

An experience that I am still fond of relating was my delivery of a saddle horse to Los Angeles. It was the fall of 1904, and I was then 12 years old. I left Nordhoff at four a.m. and it was only becoming daylight as I approached Ventura. My route was via the

Creek Road to Ventura and on to Hollywood on essentially the same course as our present 101 highway, though not nearly so straight and mostly quite dusty. It was a two-day ride, and I was instructed not to put the horse out of a walk for it was essential that he arrive at his destination in first-class condition. There were no orchards between Ventura and the Conejo grade that I can remember, and I thought it the most dreary land imaginable. Calabasas was to be a stopping place for the night. Though Coalie (the horse was coal black) was born and raised in our back mountains, he was less concerned over the clanking, squealing electric trolleys as he clomped down Sunset Boulevard than I was. Perhaps he was just weary.

For several years I made two trips a year for Harry Gorham who would spend the winter in the Ojai Valley and the summer in Santa Monica. I would bring his horse Kino up in the fall and return him to Santa Monica in the spring. 101 did not exist then so I would travel by way of Santa Paula, Fillmore and Saugus through the San Fernando Valley and Hollywood, then out Santa Monica Boulevard to Wilshire Boulevard and west on Wilshire past Sawtelle to Santa Monica. There were long uninhabited stretches along Wilshire. I remember being furious at a motorist who roared by, enveloping me in a cloud of dust. He was probably travelling at a speed of 12 miles per hour. Saugus was always my stopping place for the night, both going and coming.

Another memorable trip of about that time was to the Cuyama Valley after a horse that my father had traded for. It was a 12 hour ride through the mountains. I was given very detailed instructions as to the route; and if I missed a certain trail, I would eventually come to a deserted cattleman's cabin. I had no difficulty in finding my way, and arrived at the Reyes' old Spanish adobe home in late afternoon. One of the most awesome sights of my young life was the view from the top of Pine Mountain looking north across the Cuyama Valley to the badlands, the Apache Potrero and Mt. Piños Because the horse that I went after was not at the ranch, I had to stay over a day; and what a day that was for a 12-year-old! Rafael Reyes was a state trapper, and he took me with him and his seven dogs over hills and through canyons on his rounds to his traps. I do not remember that he caught anything that day, but I was thrilled with his accounts of experiences with lions and bears. As I was one day overdue on my return, my mother had some worrisome hours imagining me lost in a wild rugged country; Dad was unconcerned though.

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View from Pine Mountain

Divided skirt

I faintly remember the furor that went up at about the turn of the century over women riding 'cross saddle'. My mother and aunts were among the first to change. The garb they wore was a long, voluminous divided skirt that reached almost to their stirrups. One prominent citizen threatened to take his wife or sister off their horses and spank them if he caught them riding 'astride'. Our family had several sidesaddles around for years, but whatever became of them I do not know. They would be valuable antiques today.

As I have stated, the livery stable was my favorite hangout. Occasionally I would be sent with a horse and buggy around to the orange growers with a citrus buyer. Each grower sold his fruit to a private dealer. Then he picked, graded and packed the fruit and hauled it with two or four horse teams to the Nordhoff depot for shipment. I have been told that before the coming of the railroad in 1898, each grower hauled his fruit to Ventura where it was shipped by boat to San Francisco. Many an hour I have sat while the grower and the buyer haggled over the terms of the deal. In later years I learned that often the grower got badly 'rolled' by unscrupulous dealers. Such experiences of the southern California citrus growers prompted the formation of the now famous California Fruit Growers Exchange with its many local associations. Our Congressman Charles M. Teague's father, C. C. Teague of Santa Paula, was one of the leaders of the incorporation and was for many years its president.

Some of the prominent orchardists of the first decade included many whose names have long been forgotten. There was Crowell, (grandfather of Arthur Waite) Gibson, Kerschner, Clyde Wyckoff, Dr. Stewart, Krutz and Leighton, Hall and Green. And there was Stetson, Carne, Bennett, Stephenson, Friend, Thacher, Sheldon and Pierpont, all of whom have long since departed. I can think of only a few whose descendents are still in the business, but there may be others.

There was no electricity in those days, and each grower was dependent on a gasoline engine to pump irrigation water. Those engines could be very temperamental. On a quiet summer night the Fairbanks-Morse engines with their hit and miss governor could be heard all over the valley. When one was 'acting up', most of the neighbors knew it. I do not suppose there was a grower that some night or other did not saddle a horse or hitch one to a buggy, and drive to the village and get Ezra Taylor to come out and start it for him. Philip Pierpont has told me that generally the orchardist slept on a cot near the gasoline engine to be sure there was no interference in its operation. There were no telephones then, and it was vital that there be no interruption in irrigation. I am not sure, but I believe the wells were not so deep as of now, and the pumps were only centrifugal. In fact there were still a number of artesian wells flowing in the floor of the valley at that time.

Ezra Taylor was to the orchardist of that day as B. L. Saeger was to the growing families of the Ojai Valley. Both men stabled their horses just back of the Arcade and east of Stewart's grocery store. Our home was within sight of their stable, and it was not unusual to see one or the other coming in at dawn from a call and looking tired and worn. After stabling his horse, Dr. Saeger would take his satchel out of the buggy and trudge home, south of the railroad track on Ventura Street. So far as I know, no one bothered to lock their houses in those days. We did not even have a key to our house. We had no money, clothes or jewelry worth bothering about; but at our house there were always guns, liquor and riding equipment that no attempt was made to protect.

Mentioning Dr. Saeger, I think most babies were born at home, at least that was so in our family. Few had a trained nurse and I well remember one cold winter night Uncle Tom coming to our house and saying that "Ella's time had come." Our mother dressed and left with him. That January morning, 1903, Elizabeth (Toot) Clark was born; Toot says she has been told that it snowed that night.

Then at daylight I recall our father building a fire in the wood stove, calling my sister (who must have been about nine years old) lighting a coal oil lantern and leaving to attend to his horses. Margaret prepared breakfast by the light of a coal oil lamp; and after Dad left for work, we did the dishes, swept the floors, made the beds and went to school. There were other similar occasions when Mother would be away for weeks at a time, helping someone in trouble. It was all taken for granted, with no thought of compensation.

I hoed weeds for 10¢ an hour, and I really worked. As both valleys were mostly cropped to hay and grain, I toiled long hot days at either threshing grain or bailing hay. I began the first summer that I was here, at the age of eight. The hours were from five a.m. to seven p.m., and my pay was 50¢ a day. I worked four horses. Being too small to harness them from the ground, a box was provided for me to stand on. After I had grown, I hated harnessing a horse; and it was never easy for me. At the age of 12, I was promoted to wire 'tier', and I received a man's pay, $2 for a 14-hour day.

From the age of eight on I paid for everything I owned except the half-interest in our horse, Charley. I was about 16 when I loaned $250 to a local citizen at 10 percent interest. My family ribbed me a lot, calling me "Old Ten Percenter". I was sorry when he paid up some six or seven years later. If I were to relate the grueling work that a small boy of that day experienced, few people of this age would believe me. I was never actually required to take a harvesting job; but once I started my father would not allow me to quit.

I will cite one instance in particular. I must have been about 11 for I had horses to feed and care for. I was home over Sunday. It was August and hot, I was pretty well fed up with the job and persuaded my mother to let me stay home. It was late Sunday night when Dad discovered that I had not returned to work. He awakened me and questioned me as to whether Jim (I was working for Jim Thompson at the time) knew that I was not returning. When I admitted that Jim was not aware of my quitting, Dad made me dress and walk all the way to the hay bailer in the Upper Ojai. I have since paced it in a car and it was exactly seven miles. I still remember how dark it was walking up the old grade. It was well toward morning when I arrived at camp.

On Saturday we quit work early (six p.m.) I would not wait for supper; but as soon as my horses were watered, fed and unharnessed, I would start on a dog trot for home. (Even at that age I was always thrilled to come to the head of the grade just at sunset and look across the valley to the Matilija Mountains.) Mother would have a wash boiler on the wood stove, and I would get a once-a-week bath in the kitchen in the old round galvanized wash tub.

After the harvesting four- and six-horse teams would haul grain from the Upper Ojai to Ventura where it was sometimes put aboard ships and shipped to San Francisco. I have heard my elders speak of a flour mill on Ventura Avenue after which, I suppose, the Mill School was named. In summer the roads were terribly dusty, and likewise muddy in winter. I remember one winter my Uncle Tom coming from the Upper Ojai to Nordhoff for a wagon load of seed grain. The road was so muddy he had 10 horses hitched to the wagon.

I have mentioned citrus and hay in the early 1900's, but there were some agricultural ventures that were short lived. One was olive groves. It must have been in the late 1880's that several hundred acres were planted to olives, mostly in the northeast end of the valley. There are still some magnificent olive trees north of Grand Avenue near its west end and along McNell Road.

I have been told by Philip Pierpont that the fruit at that time was mostly cured in barrels for eating, but no one knew as much about the process as we know it today. Many were experimenting with their own methods. Pierpont said some even put the fruit through a meat grinder for oil, then pressed it out. In most cases for eating it, the fruit was spoiled in the attempts to cure it. Phil tells of his father giving his fruit to a man to be cured on shares. Later his father was told that his share spoiled, so Dr. Pierpont got nothing.

In about 1901 some growers formed an association and built an olive mill near the Southern Pacific depot at the south end of what is now Bald Street. My father helped put up the building and install the machinery. Then he operated the mill; in fact he was the only one who ever did. I think it was in operation less than two years. Dad not only did the crushing and pressing of the fruit, but the filtering and bottling as well. The bottled olive oil was said to have been of a superior quality, and Mr. J. J. Burke went on the road as an agent. But because of the much cheaper imported Italian product, it was not a success and the mill soon closed down. Some time later my father bought the building and the property, some nine acres.

I will relate some of my recollections of that operation. Most of the time Dad was the sole employee. Rather than shut the machinery down in the evening, he ran an around-the-clock shift. He had a cot and would take cat naps while the machinery ground on. It was run by a small gasoline engine. Our home was on north Signal Street; and three times a day, rain or shine, I promptly delivered a hot meal to him. When he turned in his time for a 24-hour a day shift (his pay was 25¢ an hour, or $6 a day) there was something of a stir among the directors. But when he proved that it was more economical to keep the machinery running (he was the only one qualified to operate it) Edward Thacher, the association President, ruled in his favor.

A few of the more ambitious youngsters, my sister included, would pick olives on Saturdays and during the Christmas holidays. We received 35¢ for picking a 60 lb. lug. Once I had $1.05 coming for picking three lugs; but my employer insisted that the boxes were not full enough, and therefore $1 was all that was due me. He later became one of Ojai's wealthier and most respected citizens. During one Christmas vacation I sorted and sacked onions for a local farmer along with three men. I was probably 14 or 15; but I consistently sacked more onions than any of the three men, and my employer admitted as much. I knew that they were receiving $2 per day for a 10 hour day; but when it came to settling up, my employer would pay me only $1.50 per day, saying the men would not like it if he gave me a man's pay. Of course I might have written it off by saying that members of my family and I had stolen enough watermelons to make up the difference. Years later I heard him jokingly remark that three generations of Clarks had stolen melons from him.

Apricot growing was quite a thriving industry during the first decade of this century. John Meiners, of Meiners Oaks, and K. P. Grant had a commercial orchard, and there were two large apricot orchards in Oak View owned by the Mahoney and Watkins. Then there was Theodore Mead where Siete Robles now is. Next to the Meads was the Leaches. What is now the K. R. #1 ranch on Reeves Road was also an apricot orchard. In the Upper Ojai were the Dennisons and Joseph Hobart who had two maiden daughters, Gertrude and Margaret. Gertrude ran the pitting shed, while Margaret supervised the kitchen. Hobart was the biggest operator of all. The Robinsons and Pinkertons had smaller orchards.

Pitting crew includes Ruby Soper, Ed Cook, Bill Raddick, Emma Clark, Anna Lynch, Jennie Spencer and Ernest Clark.

The Gray orchard, where my sister, Cousin Dorothy Clark and I worked one summer, employed about 10 girls to do the pitting and three boys to pick and haul fruit to the shed and scrape trays. (The fruit was spread on trays and dried in the sun.) We worked a 10 hour day and received $1 per day and board. Of course one had to be a good worker to hold the job. If there was any shirking, that person was soon sent home. The girls had cots in a large tent while a 'header bed' was filled with hay for us boys.

No matter how hard we worked through the long hot day, we were never too tired after supper to troop off to a neighbor's camp or to entertain neighboring crews at ours for a couple of hours of fun. Those were unforgetable times. One Saturday night Tom McGuire hitched four mules to a three-seated buckboard and crammed about 10 teenage girls into it. He then drove to Matilija Hot Springs to a dance. I walked or trotted to Nordhoff, had a bath, saddled up a horse and was there about as soon as the girls were. I do not remember how Morris Cota, the one other boy, got there.

Almonds played a more minor role in the farm operations of that time. And besides there was not the social life connected to almond

harvesting. That was before the walnut growing era. There were some small prune plantings.

The wine industry of that period might come as a surprise to present day Ojaians. The Simone vineyard on upper Reeves Road survived on into the late thirties or early forties. (In my day it was known as Nick's Winery.) While one usually associates vineyards and wineries with Italians, surprisingly the three larger commercial wineries in the Upper Ojai were owned and operated by Irish. I worked in all of them, and contrary to tradition the grapes were never 'tromped out' by bare feet. A team and wagon hauled the grapes from the vineyard to the shed where they went through a grinder, then a press, while the juice poured into thousand gallon vats. There it stood for some time to ferment before being filtered off into the 50-gallon barrels which were then plugged tight and left to age. The pulp was put out for the livestock to feed on. It would ferment, and I have seen cattle, pigs and even chickens become dead drunk. Their reactions were much the same as those of humans. Some would become beligerent and stagger about while others would become paralyzed and sleep it off.

There were certain regulations concerning the disposal of the wine that I am not too clear about, except that it could not legally be sold by the glass or gallon; but it was all right to sell it in five gallon lots or larger amounts. I spent a winter with a great aunt that had thousands of gallons of wine stored in a huge basement. Because of health reasons, I was out of school most of the time. Italian wood choppers would walk in, carrying a gallon jug each, which I would fill with 'dago red' for the sum of 25¢ a gallon. If a strange American came in in a buggy, I would not sell to him. (One might say that I was a bootlegger at the age of 13.)

Clark,Thompson and Bracken were the Upper Ojai winery people. All were Irish immigrants. Nick Walnut was an Italian immigrant who cleared the land and planted his vineyard near what is now east Reeves Road. Nick dug his own grave in his dooryard and was buried there at about the turn of the century. Now I am amused at rumors that a fortune was buried with him. He had left a family in the old country; but he willed the property to Will Thompson, then a boy of about 10 years. The wine was hauled mostly with team and wagon in 50-gallon barrels to the depot, either at Santa Paula or Nordhoff, and shipped to Los Angeles. The last of the product was shipped as vinegar and brought 15¢ a gallon. People used to quip

that it was so strong it would burn a hole in the table cloth if a drop fell on it. (We had linen table cloths in those days.)

The Italians also came to the winery to purchase wine. They were mostly wood choppers from Sulphur Mountain for at that time cutting and shipping firewood to Los Angeles and Santa Barbara was quite an industry; and several fortunes, to my knowledge, were made. One of them was Huero Obiols of an old Spanish family. There are still descendants in Ventura County. For a short period Tom Clark and John Hobson, uncle of Mrs. Fred Smith, had a wood camp where Perl's Nursery stood. Their operation extended from Villanova School to beyond the present Gourmet restaurant and over through Mira Monte to Rice Road. Fortunately Meiners Oaks was never touched and neither was the Arbolada though Austin Pierpont recently told me that certain interests were negotiating for the wood rights. He said that J. J. Burke learned of it and persuaded Foster and Hubby to buy the property; and they later sold it to Mr. Libbey. I believe they donated the land for Nordhoff High School that was built in 1911. Practically all of the oaks in the area are second growth, as well as on the north side of Sulphur Mountain.

The heavy wagons that transported wood from Sulphur Mountain and loads of grain to Nordhoff for shipment played havoc with the grade from the upper to the lower valley. It was a shorter and steeper grade than the present (Dennison) grade. As a great deal of braking was necessary, the brake shoe quickly wore thin and became ineffective. So the teamsters would run one rear wagon wheel onto an iron shoe that was attached to the bed of the wagon. The wheel was rendered immobile as the shoe slid on the rocky dirt road. It was a very effective brake, but gouged a deep rut in the dirt road; and the dust was almost intolerable. In addition the heat generated by the friction could cause sparks to start a fire should one land in the dry grass. Naturally those teamsters were not popular with the ordinary horse and buggy people. I have in recent years hunted unsuccessfully through the scrap heaps of Upper Ojai farms in quest of one of those brake shoes. I doubt that there are many today who have ever seen one.

Many Chinese as well as Italians were employed in wood cutting operations in the valley around the first of the century. Some Chinese lingered on as domestics or in other capacities for a decade or so.

Grandmother Clark

My grandmother had one who baked delicious bread. The loaves were always a beautiful deep brown. But this Chinese and my grandmother suddenly parted company when it was discovered that he would fill his mouth with water and squirt it over the loaves during the baking.

There was always a Chinese vegetable wagon pulled by one or two horses that came around once a week. (There were never fresh vegetables in the grocery store that I remember.) A carrot or turnip to each of us youngsters was always a treat, but the Chinese vendor did not always have them. No one can tell now where the vegetables were grown, probably near Ventura. A special treat that we youngsters looked forward to about Christmas time from the Chinese was 'lichee nuts'; they were delicious.

And there was a Chinese laundry at one time that was operated by Wah Lee. It was located east on Ojai Avenue, just west of the bridge and on the north side of the highway on Mrs. Gally's property (mother of Howard Gally). Wah Lee went about with a covered wagon drawn by one horse. His business survived on into the second

decade. During prohibition times he probably made more money bootlegging than doing laundry. I remember a little stir that was caused by Mrs. Gally refusing to put him out when the local officers were unable to catch him.

Chinese were said to have built the first stone walls in east Ojai Valley. It seems to me that the walls looked as old at the turn of the century as they look now. Those walls do not include the ones on east Ojai Avenue, east Grand, north Carne and the one on the Twin Peaks ranch. I have been told that these Chinese received 50¢ a day.

There was not too much law enforcement in that day, and the poor Chinese sometimes had a pretty rough time of it. I have heard my mother tell of her brother roping (lassoing) one as he plodded along the dusty road. Tom was riding a colt and could not manage the rope and the colt at the same time; the result was the 'Chinaman' climbed up the rope and took it away from him. Tom dismounted, Katie held the colt and Tom tusseled with the Chinese to retrieve the rope. Later the fellow returned with a shotgun, but Tom had ridden off to the Upper Ojai; Katie's mother hid her in a clothes closet and locked all of the doors. After circling the house a couple of times, the Chinese departed. That house was the two-story yellow building south and west of the Ojai Lumber Company yard.

The laundryman was driving west on Main Street when some boys lifted a basket of laundry out of the wagon and set it down on the street; but someone drew his attention to what had happened. Well, that fellow had the last laugh. Some time later the boys who had taken his laundry were swimming in the creek beyond Clausen's Dairy. He slipped up and stole all of their clothes. Needless to say, they were not returned nicely laundered. One dark night a group of rowdies surrounded the wash house and began firing guns into the air. The occupant of the house opened the door and returned the fire. In the rowdies' haste to clear out one was almost decapitated on a clothes line.

Presumably El Toro Road in the Arbolada got its name from the slaughter house that once existed in that vicinity just off Foothill Road. When people began to build houses along the road, the offensive business was moved to Del Norte Road across from the cemetery. All meat for the valley was dressed at the slaughter house.

Three times a week the meat wagon, a covered one drawn by two horses, made the round of the east end of the valley, stopping at all the homes and ranches in that vicinity. Among them were W. C. Hendrickson, Fred Udall, the Pierpont Cottages, Dr. Hollingsworth, the Lords (parents of Denham Lord) A. L. Dodge, Thacher School, the McAndrews, E. S. Thacher and the Jim Chapmans. On alternate days the wagon went to the Upper Ojai and among those served were the Dennisons, Clarks, Hobarts, Thompsons, Robinsons, McGuires, Grays, Burnells, Pinkertons and Brackens. Annie Pinkerton always had a nice piece of pie for the meat man. Mr. Houk had a very good butcher, but he could not resist Jimmie Braken's wine at the upper end of his route. When the man imbibed too heavily, Fred Houk tells me that his father used to send him along to drive the team home.

What I recall in particular was the butcher letting the wagon tail gate down (it served as a cutting and packaging block) and the flies swarming in during the summer. When the customer was served, the butcher would swish the flies away with his flour sack apron; then hurriedly close the end gate. All that I remember about the price of meat was that 15¢ worth of round steak was sufficient for a family of four, with a tidbit for the family dog.

As well as I can remember there was no regular dairy with milk delivery until about 1915-18; but a great many people had a family cow, sometimes two or three, and they would sell to neighbors a quart or so now and then. When there was a surplus of milk, some would make butter and exchange it for groceries. Certain townspeople pastured their cows in the 'park', now the Arbolada. The boundries were essentially the same as of today. Now as I drive over those confusing roads, my wife wonders how I know where I am going. I reply that considering the dark nights I combed the park for a stray cow, I should know my way about.

And what I know about sanitation, or the lack of it in the production and handling of milk and butter would fill quite a volume. Since the churning and working of the butter was by hand (that is, separating the milk from the butter and molding it) and there was no refrigeration, the product very quickly became rancid. And of course the milk would sour very readily. I am sure much of the same would apply to meat. I was familiar with that business for several years before the Houks came to Nordhoff and installed refrigeration. Among those that I delivered milk were the Pratts, the

Libbeys and the Robertsons. The grocer did not dispense eggs in nice clean cartons as we know them. Generally the eggs were a week or more in accumulating, and many were fertile. There was no candling, so not infrequently an egg on being opened would reveal an embryo (not very appetizing). One of the town rowdies could crow like a rooster, and in the middle of the night would get the many, many neighbors roosters started to crowing, thus setting off a general chorus. Naturally he was not popular with the neighbors.

Gypsum mining at about the turn of the century was a minor industry and lasted but a short time. There are still craters visible on the Happy Valley School property near the girls' dormitory from that operation in the Upper Ojai. Little was said about the shipping of asphaltum in wooden barrels, and I imagine it was a rather sticky deal. The gold strike along the foothills of the northeast side of the Ojai Valley caused quite a bit of excitement with the staking of claims and some tunneling. I never heard of any millionaries resulting from it though.

There were numerous homesteaders located from the middle Sespe on (that is, from the Sespe Cold Springs, now Hartman's place). How they expected to make a living is still a mystery to me, and many moved out without proving up on their claims. Among those who did stay were the Lathrops (Herb and his father) the Harrows, the Pattons (Clarence and his father) White, Willett and Cottrell. To a boy they were not as picturesque as the cattlemen from the Upper Sespe; but judging by the farming and mining equipment and tools that were in evidence when I went out there in later years, they must have been a pretty resourceful and self-sufficient lot of men, to say nothing of being industrious.

There was Mr. Willett (grandfather of Jack Willett, who once operated The Barn on south Montgomery Street). He also transported a complete line of farming implements over the rugged mountains. He used only burros. This elderly man would be seen coming out of Senior Canyon, walking and leading a string of burros, followed by a shepherd dog. There was a hitch rail where the parking lot is now back of Rains' dry goods store, where he tied the burros while doing his shopping. After packing his supplies on the animals, he would disappear into Senior Canyon. I later learned that he took three days making the round trip from his (Willett's)

Hot Springs, camping two nights in Senior Canyon (one coming and one going). There were few well defined trails in that area, and mostly he followed the ridges. That was not as difficult as it sounds for until that area became a national forest, the terrain was systematically burned off by the sheep and cattle men.

The Harrows farmed the Rose Valley as well as their home place where they built substantial log cabins and barns. A farm wagon, plows, harrows, mowing machine and rake were all transported over the mountain from Nordhoff on very inadequate trails.

Perhaps the most resourceful of them all was Herb Lathrop for not only did he pack and (I suspect, drag) in all the farm equipment that went with ranching, but he maintained and operated a tourist resort that was equipped with conveniences that were considered quite modern in that day. It was a favorite spot for hunters and fishermen. It was said that no huntsman needed to return to Los Angeles without a deer. I know from my own later experience that his cooking was tops. Each fall Herb would ride into Nordhoff leading a string of pack horses, each one laden with three boxes of beautiful red apples that I believe he traded to the grocerymen for supplies. In November 1916 he was shot to death by a guest who mistook him for a wildcat.

When a small boy, I listened to fantastic stories of Jeff Howard (after whom Howard Creek in the Sespe was named) and his murder of the Basque sheepman. There was feuding between the cattle and sheep men and killings, but the Jeff Howard episode was one of the most colorful. A few years ago a great grandson came here trying to find the location of Jeff's homestead. And so far as I know, I am the only one left who could furnish that information (I got mine from Lathrop). But in the archives of the Ventura library were found newspaper accounts of Jeff's exploits, his arrests and several jail breaks and escapes. The last item said, "Goodbye, Jeff. We hope we never see you again. We have to build a new jail." He died in Arizona in 1910.

The back country men and their fall cattle drives were the most picturesque and exciting of all to me. Along in November the cattle for market would be rounded up, and those in the upper Cuyama Valley would be driven via trail over Pine Mountain to the upper Sespe where they would join with the herds there and those from the upper Santa Ynez Valley. There being no highways and trucks, the cattle were driven single file from the Sespe through Cherry Canyon over

Ortega Hill into the north fork of the Matilija and down to the Ortega ranch (some six miles above the upper edge of Matilija Lake). There they camped the second night. (It would be the third night for the Cuyama cattlemen). From the Matilija Hot Springs on to Ventura it was easy going for they had a road to travel. What is now Casitas Springs was known as Stony Flat, and was a large hay field. There the cattle were held overnight and the next day delivered to lima bean fields east of Ventura where they became the property of the Hobson brothers, Will and Abe, the fathers respectively of Mrs. Edith Hoffman and Mrs. Grace Smith. The Matilija School children were alerted well in advance by the bawling cattle and shouting cowboys as they forded the stream some 100 yards above the school. School would be dismissed until the last yip of the cowboys died away down the dusty road.

Among the cattlemen on these drives were various Reyes boys (Rudolpho, Anselmo, Peter and Rafael). Then there were the Wegis brothers, Frank and Gebhard. They were all from the Cuyama. From the Sespe and upper Santa Ynez were the Eduardo Canet cowboys and various homesteaders, among them Ygnacio Ramos, the Warner brothers (Dave and Jack) Ramon Cota and Manual Lopez. Perhaps the most colorful were the Ortega brothers, especially Ramon. There were many legends of their exploits in that rough country. Ramon Ortega went over a bluff in 1914 at the age of 82 and both he and his horse were killed. He had always said he would die back there, and that he did not want to be packed out like a dead deer. Jacinto Reyes (he was always affectionately known as J. D.) brought Uncle Ramon out sitting upright on a saddle horse as he had always wished to be.

In 1898 the Santa Barbara (now Los Padres) National Forest was created with headquarters in Nordhoff. The boundaries extended from Castaic up into San Luis Obispo County and north into Kern County. Willis M. Slosson was sent out from the east as supervisor. Men were recruited from all parts of the 'black country'; and they were largely homesteaders, cowboys, miners and such. Their pay was $60 per month. They had to own at least two horses and maintain them. Generally the ranger (they were all rangers then) had to provide his own quarters. There were no fringe benefits.

Since the only means of getting about was via saddle and pack horses, there was a great deal of forest activity in the valley with

Ranger bar-b-que:
Bob Clark, Fred de la Riva, Jacinto Reyes and Lawrence Slarson.

Nordhoff the national forest headquarters, that is, mountain men coming and going. A more rugged, hardy, self-sufficient, picturesque group of men would be hard to imagine. Though as a whole they were rather short on formal education, they accomplished a prodigious amount in the way of trail building and maintaining, investigating mines and homesteads, issuing grazing permits and performing fire suppression. They were also deputy fish and game commissioners.

At first, there were no telephones or radios, no airplanes, no lookout stations and but few trails. Sometimes a ranger would ride a day or more to get to a fire. The nearest one to a fire might recruit a few men (homesteaders, cattlemen or miners) and with just a few simple tools attack the flames. One wonders now how they accomplished so much with so few men and so little equipment.

Among some of the more colorful men of that period was Jacinto Reyes who to this day is a legend among people in the back country, not only for his fire fighting but also for his horsemanship, endurance, rescue work and ability to settle sometimes violent disputes among homesteaders, cattlemen or miners. Then there were his brother (Geraldo Reyes) Fred Ortega and Fred de la Riva. They were what

we called in that day 'California Spanish'. They were great horsemen and very capable. My father, George Bald, became one of them in 1903 and until the mid-twenties was chief ranger of this area. Trevor Isenberg, Jerome Larmer, Bob Clark, Bob Miller, Bill Herbert, the Leiber brothers, Tom Dunsmore and Gene Johnson were among others of that day that I remember. They were what one might call 'real westerners'.

There is an amusing story that might give an idea of how that breed of men could impress the uninitiated easterner. Sarah McMullen was a nurse who came to take care of Loring Farnum, a semi-invalid who bought our Rinconada ranch, later the Orchid Ranch. She always began the story with: "The worst fright I ever had was being confronted at Mr. Farnum's front door by three of the awfullest looking men I ever laid eyes on!" Then there would be a detailed description of the three: 'Two were huge, very dark complexioned men with high cheek bones and dark, piercing eyes; the third man was short with a sandy complexion and legs like a pair of ice tongs." The refrain would be: "And that was your father." They wore broad-brimmed, low-crowned hats and red bandanas and, of course, were unshaven; they curtly asked to see Mr. Farnum. "I was trembling so, I could hardly speak when I went back to Mr. Farnum's room and said to him, 'There are three of the most terrible men I ever saw who say they want to see you.' Mr. Farnum said, 'Well, show them in!'" As I pictured the scene Jacinto and Geraldo Reyes and my dad were returning from a week camping in the mountains. They were tired, dusty and of course thirsty; and they knew that Mr. Farnum was always generous with the drinks.

While on the subject of forestry and rangers, I must mention Ojai's first big fire. It started on the morning of June 17 in the year of 1917 below Wheeler's Hot Springs and travelled in a southwesterly direction toward Nordhoff. By 10 o'clock that night part of the village was in ashes, as were also several fine homes along Foothill Road. Among them were Miss Draper's cottage, the Foothills Hotel and the Robertson and Dr. Van Patten homes. I am not sure whether it was in the 1917 or the 1948 fire that Thacher school boys were credited with saving the Pratt home on north Foothill Road. Many homes in the north part of the village burned, also the Roman Catholic Church which stood where the present building stands. Of course there was general pandemonium, and it became a matter of each person or family for themselves.

Ojai fire, 1917 8:00 p.m.

When word came to me that every woman in the valley had been evacuated, I rushed home fearing for the safety of our horses. My parents then lived on south Ventura Street. In the yard I found my mother with one horse saddled and four pack and saddle horses tied head-to-tail, and about ready to depart. The fire was then burning in dry grass just back of our stable and in Dr. Saeger's and the Hobson's back yards. Mother and I carried out a tub of water and beat the fire out with wet barley sacks.

Since I was the youngest and lowest in rank in the Forest Service, I was sent from one hot spot to another with crews of from 10 to 20 men. They were mostly inexperienced Mexicans from the Santa Paula Limonera ranch, and none of them spoke English. At one period of the conflagration, I sent a 14-year-old boy up the Wheeler-Pratt Trail from Wheelers Hot Springs with saddle and pack horses and with food and water for 20 Mexicans whom I had left in a canyon approximately north of the present Nordhoff peak lookout. When the boy was halfway up the mountain, the fire which was burning on the south slope just back of the Hot Springs broke away, jumped the canyon and roared up the mountain behind the boy and his two horses. There seemed to be no possibility of their surviving; and it was not until the next day that I learned he got out with a few scratches, but both horses burned to death. For 10 days I was never in a bed, but had sketchy naps in the warm ashes along the ridge from the Pratt Trail to the Chief. And as I was the lowest on the rung, I might say that I got the hot end of the stick for I was left alone for several days to patrol the fire line for hot spots.

George Bald, Ranger 1909

I will relate an episode that my father was involved in. It was the fall of 1907. He was returning from the back country via Wheelers Hot Springs, named for Wheeler Blumberg, a colorful person of that day. Blumberg was never known by any name other than Wheeler; I think his father built Nordhoff's first hotel in 1874. The Maricopa Road, now Highway 33, ended at the hot springs then. It was night. As he approached the springs he was stopped and advised not to go through because a guest had gone berserk and was shooting anything that moved. So Dad was bypassing the springs on a rough brushy trail when the demented person on the other side of the creek cut loose with a rifle. Dad and the horse made a pretty fast getaway. Returning to the wagon road some distance below, Dad mounted again. He was congratulating himself on his escape when he found the road blocked by Sheriff McMartin and an armed posse. When the sheriff informed him that he was being deputized to assist in the capture and that they were not to take any chances but were to shoot to kill if there was any resistance, Dad tried hard to be excused. He had riden long hours through the mountains that day, and was tired and hungry. Besides, this person had been a good friend for years, and they had visited together just that morning; he wanted no part in killing him. McMartin replied that Ranger Bald was just the man he wanted and shoving a rifle in his hands, started him back up the road along with five other men to deploy around

buildings and trees. The capture was completed before morning with little resistance, and no one was hurt. Dad was glad to surrender the rifle and continue on to Nordhoff.

While working for the Forest Service was a free casual life, there were some rough times too. One cold morning a colt bucked me off at the Mutau Meadows gate. That night with the aid of a coal oil lantern and a broken mirror I found in the Mutau cabin and my pocketknife, I picked the gravel out of one cheek. It looked as if I had been hit with buckshot. But it was well healed before anyone saw me two weeks later, and I did not even have a bandage or iodine. Another time a colt got away from me with my saddle and hackamore, and I did not find it until the next morning. A bear came into camp one night and stampeded all of my stock; most of them I found late the next day. But the horses and mules apparently went in all directions. One I found a week later in the upper Piru Creek area.

Customarily I rode out to civilization at the end of each month and filed a report on my activities of that month, bought supplies for the next month, had certain animals shod (I always carried extra horseshoes and hammer and nails for emergencies) and returned the next day to my main camp.

A much later resident of the Sespe was a moronic homesteader named Jake Hartman, after whom the Hartman place was named. Jake's fame stemmed mostly from entertaining Sespe campers with tales of the men he had killed or was about to kill. Earle Stanley Gardner, who was a Ventura attorney of that period, was greatly amused with Jake's boasting and encouraged him to spin more yarns by suggesting that he kill someone, as things were slack in the law business. Jake would wag his head, saying "If the 'goldarn' rangers and game wardens did not stop snooping around," he would have a job. Gardner would return to camp and tell me everything Jake had said, knowing that I was the only ranger or game warden in that area, and that outwardly Jake and I were good friends.

An impressionable, overgrown, teenage boy and his mother had come to live with Jake; and it soon became the boy's ambition to be a badman like his friend. An elderly, rheumatic man camped most of that summer at the Sespe Hot Springs to soak in the hot mineral water. His camp was some six miles from Jake Hartman's. A feud

developed over the alledged theft of a gun, and Jake and the boy threatened to kill him if he did not leave the Sespe. I did what I could to cool off the two factions, my only fear being that they would beat him up. At the end of the fire season, November 1917, I moved out of the Sespe and in two weeks was on my way to the forests of France. Shortly after that the boy shot and killed the old fellow. Although Jake was not present at the murder, the dimwitted kid certainly had plenty of encouragement from him.

The trial was held in Ventura, and I was told that Gardner put up a hard fight in the boy's defense. But Gardner lost and Billy was given a 10-year prison sentence. Mercifully he died before his term expired. I do not believe that Gardner got a penny for his services. And I was grateful that I was thousands of miles away for I would have been a very poor witness for the defense and the lawyer.

A few years ago I visited the old man's grave site in a side canyon of the Sespe. There was not a name or date on the wooden cross, and I am not too sure now what his name was. But somehow Corocoran sticks in my mind. Since he came from the San Joaquin Valley, it could have been that Corcoran was his home town. Once in reminiscing I asked Gardner if he ever used Jake in any of his stories. He replied: "Yes, and you too." I would not know, for I never read them.

I am still fond of regaling present day nimrods of the hunting and fishing in the Sespe of that period. Fifty trout was the limit, and an ordinary fisherman with dry flies might snag that many in two hours. On one occasion I rode out to Nordhoff with 150 trout, the catch of Earle Stanley Gardner, Fred Orr and myself. We caught them before breakfast, and it took us an hour and a half. They were native rainbow trout. During the five summers I was in the Sespe as a ranger, trout were an important part of my diet, and I never tired of them. Such fishing was not to be had in the Matilija Creek. It was too accessible.

I think it was in the summer of 1915 that I almost lost my job for killing more than the limit of two deer. Bill Herbert, Gardner and I were hunting more or less together. Herbert and I had each bagged one buck. Then he crippled a forked horn and lost it entirely; but unknown to him, I finished it quite a distance from where he had shot it. By comparing experiences, it was proved that I had killed the deer he had wounded. As that left one of us with the limit for the season, neither one wanted to take the credit for it. Finally, at Gardner's suggestion it was agreed that both of us would hunt the

next Sunday; and if one got a buck, the other hunter would take the credit for the previously killed deer.

I killed another deer; and my father, who was a deputy game warden too and under whom I was working, was furious; and threatened to "take me in". (All of this was over the telephone.) With Gardner egging me on I got a little cocky and defied him, which prompted Dad to threaten to fire me. Probably because it was a two-day round trip from Nordhoff to Pine Mt. Lodge on a saddle-horse, things gradually cooled off; and neither Herbert nor I hunted any more that season.

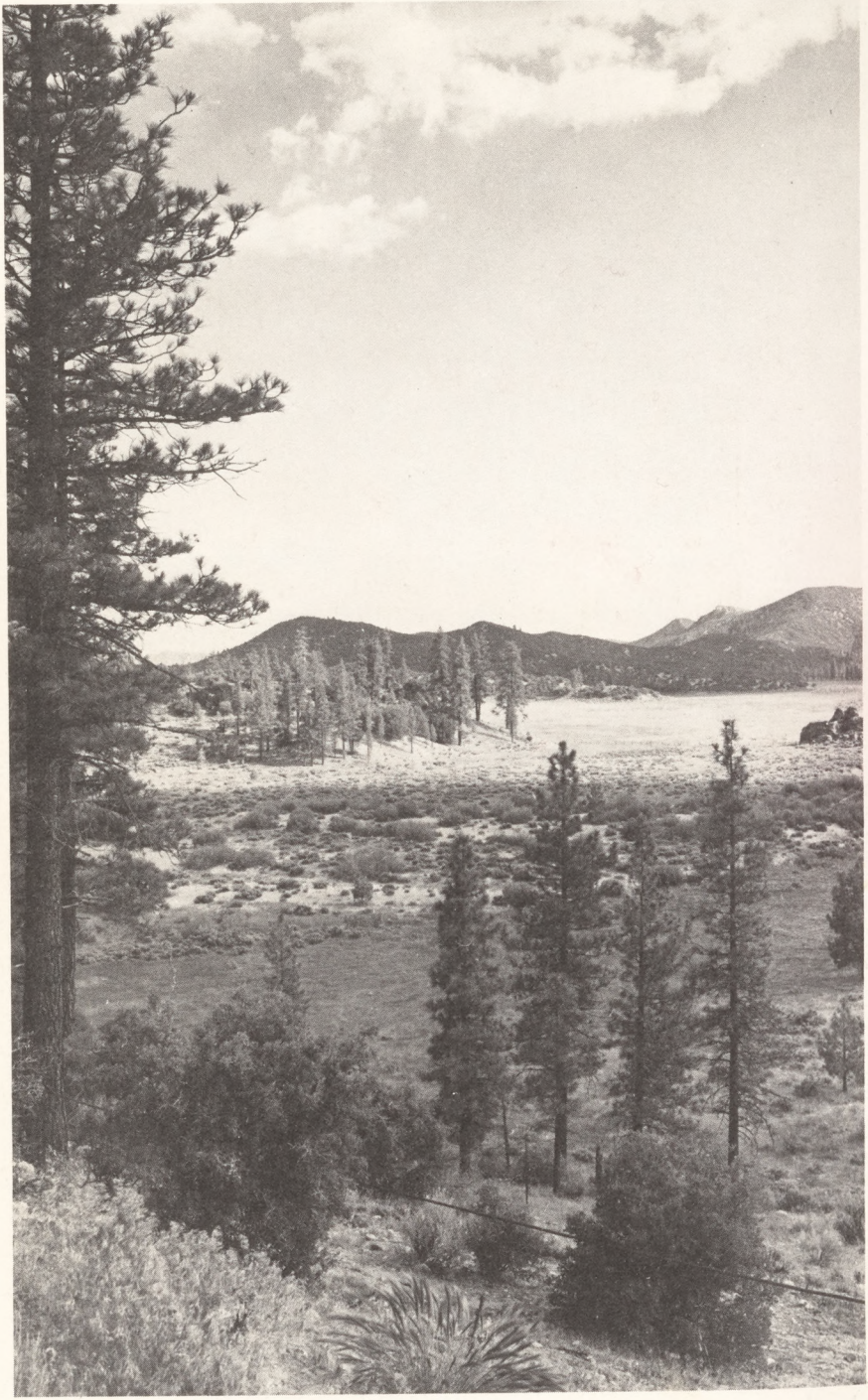
I could go on and on with stories about Gardner, but will try to confine myself to just a couple. In the evenings in camp he insisted on playing poker. None of the rest of us were particularly interested, but we went along with him and I was the biggest loser. No money changed hands, but each evening he would get out what he called his doomsday book and enter his winnings. I was not so concerned as were the other two of our foursome, for he was really my guest. I had furnished the pack and saddle horses and grub, and I felt I could fairly balance the books in the end. On his departure he produced the doomsday book and tallied up what each of us owed him. Then he tore that page out and dropped it on the campfire. He told me that he had supported himself in college by playing poker. (He once said that he had never gone to law school.)

One evening in camp we got to scuffling, and it developed into a wrestling match. Not being much of a wrestler, I was surprised when I downed him. His face was flushed when he got up, saying that he wished we had some boxing gloves. I said that was just what I was thinking. It was much later that I learned how lucky I was for at one time he had been a pug prize fighter.

I must have been born under a lucky star to have lived at such a period and to have had such opportunities. From what I hear and read now of the Sespe, I do not think I want to see it again. I like to picture it as it was when I was just out of high school in 1913 and was turned loose out there to come and go as I pleased. There was a Forest Service telephone line that went up Senior Canyon and over the mountain through the Sespe, ending at the ranger station in the upper Cuyama. The only access to the back country was by hiking and riding trails. There were fewer than now, but they

were well maintained. The Forest Service was chronically short of funds. Some years I alone with pack and saddlehorse patrolled from the upper Sespe Gorge (Highway 33 now passes through it) down the river to the Sespe Hot Springs, up to the Mutau (where I had a branch camp) then on to Alamo Mountain, Lockwood Valley and across San Guillermo Mountain to the upper Piru Creek, Thorn Meadows, Cedar Creek and the eastern half of Pine Mountain. There were seasons when appropriations provided for stationing a guard in the Lockwood. I remember one summer that Frank DeLine and his wife occupied an abandoned school house in the Lockwood Valley.

Actually my territory was not very well defined and seldom did anyone officially know where I was. My father was the only ranger in the Ojai district. Some years he might have a guard stationed in the Matilija or Santa Ana Valley or in Santa Paula Canyon. My mother took all telephone calls. Up until 1912 the Ojai ranger station had no telephone at all. Perhaps the Mutau area was my favorite, and I still like to think of the nights spent there with only the stars overhead. I can hear the wind in the pines and the screech or hoot of an owl, or the bawl of a steer across the meadow, or the howl of a coyote in the distance. I could make up my own mind as to where I would go the next day. Occasionally I would meet one of Bert Snedden's cowboys and spend a day or two with him. It was all part of becoming familiar with the country.



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Mutau Flat

Winter
1978

Vol. XXIII
No. 2

Ventura County Historical Society QUARTERLY

Ventura County Historical Society

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The
Ventura County Historical Society
Quarterly

Vol. XXIII, No. 2 Winter 1978

Grant W. Heil, Editor

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Notice

Photographs for the pictures came from Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Percy, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Ranger, Mr. and Mrs. James Fulkerson, Dean Mercer, Mrs. Reneé Canet Pezzi and the Ojai Valley Historical Society. The sketch of the reservoir is by John Brothers from Mr. Percy's description; the automobiles were drawn by Michael Cole.

Eugene Percy in the front seat with his grandfather, E. P. Foster

TRAFFIC ON VENTURA AVENUE: HORSES AND BUGGIES TO ROLLERSKATES

By Eugene Foster Percy

Automobiles arrived in Ventura County before I did. Thomas E. Cunnane, M.D., who assisted in my arrival, told my folks they should buy an automobile instead of a baby buggy since from his experience babies liked the fast motion of an automobile better than the slow movement of a baby carriage. Being a $75 a month bank employee at that time, my father had to satisfy his family with a horse and buggy.

My maternal grandfather, Eugene Preston (E. P.) Foster, had a four-cylinder Maxwell touring car, the first automobile I was aware of. It was a right hand drive, without a windshield or top. There were kerosene carriage lamps on each side of the dash board and carbide headlights, but no doors on either side of the two front seats; of course it had to be cranked, and the horn was a rubber bulb that you squeezed. The back seat was called the tonneau because there were doors on each side and its floor was a nice place for sleepy children. Some time about 1910 Grandfather and Grandmother drove the Maxwell to San Jose where my father, mother, baby sister and I caught up with them by train; and we toured some of the northern part of the state. Grandfather repeated the story of that trip over and over again to us children so that the memory of what I saw remains imprinted in my mind to this day.

If you lived in town and owned an automobile, you probably got along without a horse and buggy. The Ventura Avenue had been oiled out as far as the city limits, about a mile north of Main Street; and if I recall correctly, Main was oiled a little way east but from there on the roads were dirt, dry in the summer and wet in the winter. The county ran a sprinkling wagon from the city limits up through Foster Park when it was dry; but when it was wet (that is, very wet) those who lived out of town got out their horses and buggies. Many of those horses could be ridden or driven. Grandfather drove Sam, a black gelding, to the bank (National Bank of Ventura); my father rode our brown mare, Gyp; and Uncle Henry

The Fosters with the Maxwell in the park

E. P. Foster in shirt sleeves

Neel drove a gray mare, Patsy. They left them at the livery stable on Oak Street opposite to where the Great Eastern is today. The bank was on the southwest corner of Oak and Main Streets.

There were no culverts in the road from the Avenue School south to the city limits that I was ever aware of; so when the gutter on the east side of the road became overloaded, the water ran across the road in the direction of the river and ended by making some good size mud holes. The road above and below might be dry enough to travel with a car, but the mud holes would seem to last from one rain until the next. If an automobile driver managed to negotiate the mud holes without having to be pulled out by a team of horses, he thought he had something to brag about. I remember one mud hole was just below Hyde Chaffee's house in that section where the Foster School is today. The solution to the mud holes was to gravel them but the gravel came from the river bed and was hauled in wagons with two-by-four bottoms, which were dumped by removing one board at a time. A slow process, but even slower was loading with a pick and shovel. Sometimes a good gravel bed without too many larger rocks would be hard to find in the river in a heavy rainy season.

Grandmother Foster was an active club woman. As far back as I can remember she always had a cook and Aunt Pearl looked after the housekeeping, so Grandmother had time to be on committees with this or that club. Since Sam and the buggy were just too slow, Grandfather bought her a two-cylinder runabout. The first trouble they had with it was the timing: even with the spark lever retarded, it would kick back enough to wrench her shoulder; and it took a few visits to the garage before they finally adjusted it. Grandmother's next troubles concerned some of the telephone poles on the street corners in town, but she finally broke herself from turning before she arrived at the corner. Grandfather pointed out some of the telephone poles she had left her mark on. I was with Aunt Pearl coming home from town one day when something went wrong with the steering gear of the little Maxwell and we headed out into Carl Vince's bean field. *Unsafe at any speed* had not been published but the little Maxwell would have qualified. The final episode that queered me from riding in that Maxwell occurred one day when I went with my mother and grandmother to pick up my cousin, Bob Baker, who was an infant in arms. His mother (Mrs. Neill Baker) was going to a party. Grandmother was driving and Mother held Bobby while I sat on the floor on the left-hand side with my feet on the running board as the bucket seats did not have any space between them. We were coming down Main Street traveling west when the Ewings came down Chestnut Street on their way to catch a train. They were being driven by their son. They had entered the intersection; but Grandmother, instead of slowing down and turning in behind them, on impulse stepped on the gas and swung to the left hand side of the street in front of them. They were not going fast but the son had turned his head around to speak to his mother in the back seat. He struck the Maxwell broadside. Just before they collided Grandmother shouted, "Look out!" When I felt the bump, I lit running to get out of the way; and as I looked back over my shoulder, I saw Mother lying in the street holding Bobby at arm's length to keep him out of harm's way. Grandmother was landing on her hands and knees beside her. Ed Mercer's garage was on the southeast corner of Main and Chestnut so the little Maxwell was tipped back on its wheels and rolled into the garage. Grandfather came from the bank and took us home. I was at Grandmother's house the afternoon that Mrs. Ewing called to see if she had been hurt and to apologize for her son not looking where he was going.

Ed Mercer's garage on Main St.

Ed Mercer's garage on Main St.

Horace between Pearl and Mildred Foster

Their car must have suffered some damage as they had missed the train. I do not ever remember Grandmother driving after that; but Aunt Pearl and Aunt Mildred used the little Maxwell until it was finally replaced by a Dodge roadster.

My father and mother bought a car shortly before the last episode with the Maxwell. It was a Regal underslung. The one big talking point for it was that it would not tip over but on the other hand you had to keep the wheels out of the ruts as its road clearance was about the same as present day cars. It had a windshield which was termed a 'glass front' at that time and four doors (only three of them opened). There were electric lights and horn but no generator to charge the battery. It had to be taken to town to have that done. (The automobiles with carbide lights had to have their acetylene cylinders exchanged the same way.)

Grandfather and Grandmother went to Los Angeles for a few days in 1912; and when they came home, they were driving a seven-passenger Winton Six with a 'glass front', top and four doors (Grand-

Mrs. Walker and the Fosters in the "Big" Winton

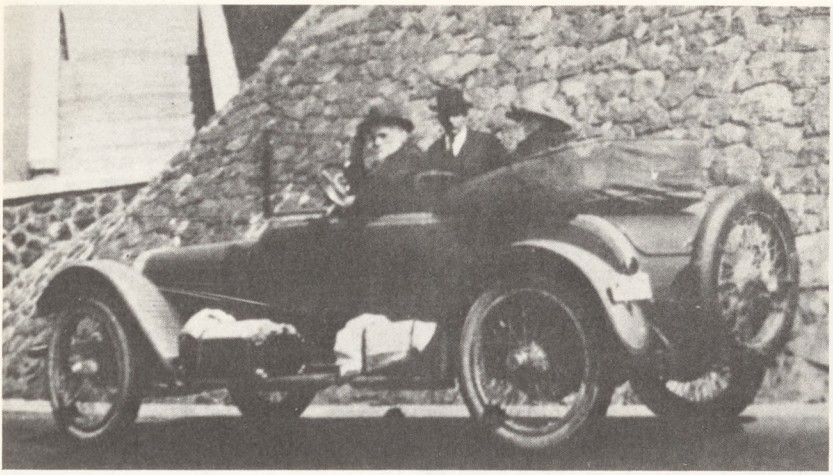
father never put up the top). It also had a self-starter which was a tank full of compressed air that forced each cylinder down when it was time for the power stroke to make the engine turn over. The tank must have held only enough air for one power stroke per cylinder; after that, you ran out of air and had to get the crank out of the tool box between the two front seats. You also had to remember to engage the compressor and build up pressure before you stopped the engine or there would be no self-starter the next time. That air tank was also handy for inflating tires after fixing a puncture which was quite common. The Winton also had a fourth gear which was an overdrive. If the road was level and smooth enough and you got up enough speed, it could be shifted to overdrive; and the 48 HP that the engine was rated at would maintain the momentum. Like our Regal it also had electric lights and horn, a very commanding one for the time. I think that the Winton must have had a generator to charge the battery as the horn was always in good working order.

Since Grandfather did not want to take his hand off the steering wheel to press the horn button which was down on the steering post, he gave Grandmother that job. He had the button moved to the front side of the tool box; and to be sure of making contact, another button was on the floor boards where she could press it with her foot. Going over the old Casitas Pass Road to Santa Barbara, she

E. P. Foster maneuvers

gave it quite a workout. One Sunday we had been up to Goleta to visit Aunt Lucy and Uncle Joe Sexton. Aunt Lucy was Grandfather's sister. This was shortly after the Rincon had been paved; and the pavement was not too wide, about 18 feet. Grandfather got up momentum and shifted into overdrive and was going along whistling a tune when two cars ahead, one starting to pass the other, pulled abreast. Grandfather said, "Blow the horn, Mother" and she did. Both cars hit the dirt on each side of the road and we sailed through in-between; he never lost momentum.

Being indoors at the bank made Grandfather appreciate the outdoors enough so that he never wanted to put the Winton top up. At times when the sun was hot or the road was dusty, there was some agitation on the the part of the women folks for a little shade. In Los Angeles there were a few cars that were driven by chauffeurs which had what was called 'Victoria tops': society people rode in the back seat shaded by a top that looked like an over grown baby buggy cover. Grandfather had one of these put on the Winton so that those who wanted it could have shade. He stayed out in the open. That 'Victoria top' made a wonderful wind scoop and cut down on the mileage he got with the Winton so he turned to using distillate, a fuel employed in early tractors and stationary gas engines and considerably cheaper than gasolene. The engine had to be started on



"Little" Winton on a trip

gasolene from a reserve tank under the dash, then was switched over to distillate by opening and closing valves. When the engine cooled off, the carburetor had to be drained before gasolene was let in for starting (another process no one would want to bother with today).

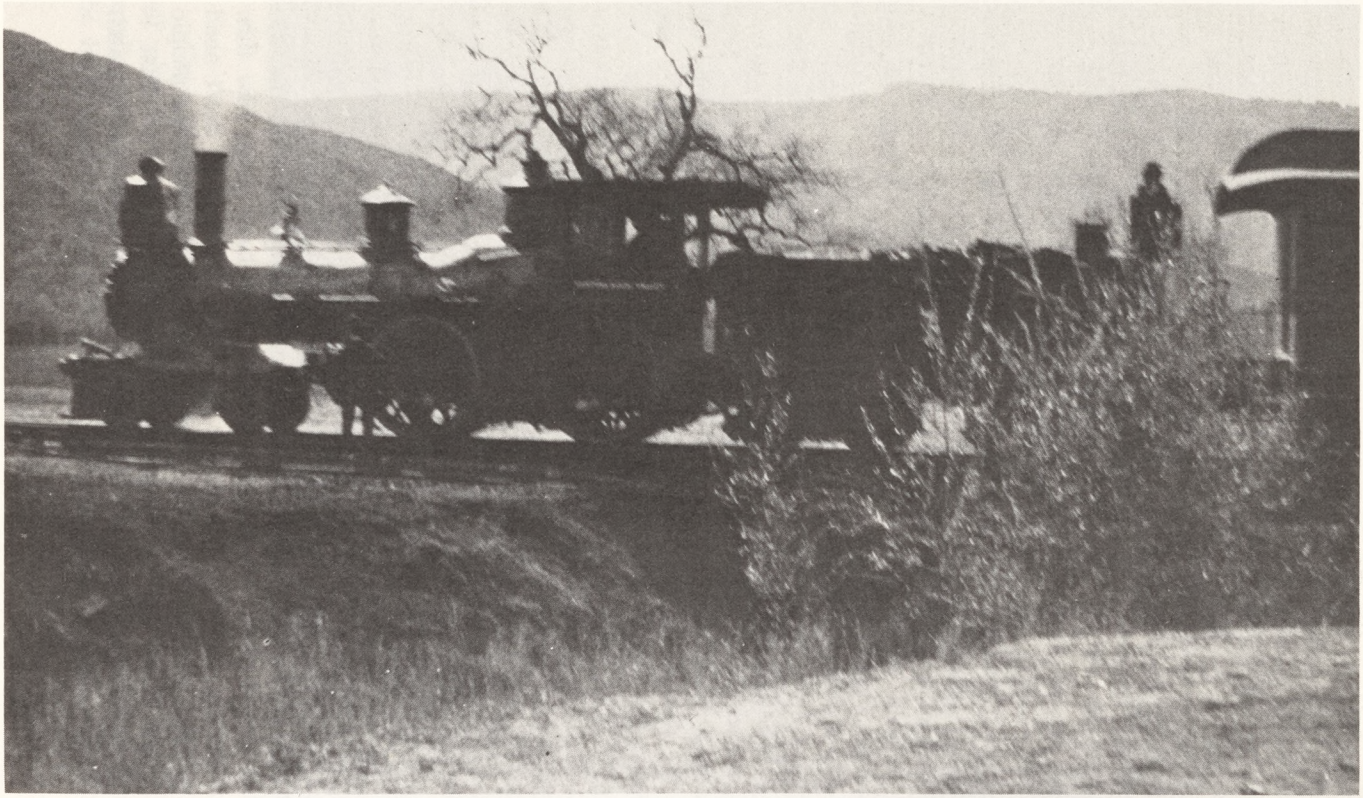
Grandfather and I were red-green color blind; and when he first got the Winton, all we knew was that it was a dark shade. I asked my mother what the color was and she told me it was dark red. When it came time to have it repainted, Grandfather selected a lemon yellow with black trim on the edges of the fenders. Considering some of the colors you see on present day cars, he was way ahead of his time. I remember asking Grandfather what kind of car he was going to buy next time. His answer was pessimistic about himself and optimistic about the Winton because he though it would last the rest of his life. When all the son-in-laws had their own cars, the seven-passenger Winton was not needed so often. Then he bought a four-passenger Winton roadster which was always referred to as the "little Winton", and the "big Winton" became sort of an utility wagon. When the Winton motorcar became obsolete, he bought a couple Rickenbacker cars, a sedan for Grandmother and Aunt Pearl and a roadster for himself; but riding in the sedan convinced him that it was time to come in from outdoors and he exchanged it for a coupe. As an automobile the Rickenbacker hardly got off the ground before it became obsolete; and when parts became hard to get, he switched to Pierce Arrow. It too has now joined the ranks of vintage cars.

Edward Canet, equestrian

Fred Wadleigh was one automobile driver that announced himself when he came to town. The Rancho Casitas in some of my early recollections was known as the Wadleigh ranch. While working for the Hoffmans, the late Alfonso Vanegas occupied the house that the

Wadleighs had lived in. Fred had a brass whistle (much on the order of the steam whistle) connected to the exhaust pipe just behind the manifold; and the faster the engine ran, the louder the whistle. He drove about as fast as the cars and the roads at that time would let him. He saluted everyone along the way and he must have known nearly everyone as the whistle would be blowing long before he reached our neighborhood. Fred probably blew for Ed Canet, Denny Barnard, Allen Fraser and Louis Hartman; at Gosnell Hill (or Two Mile Bend) he would give a prolonged blast because originally the turn was almost a right-angled blind corner and his sister-in-law, married to Ira Gosnell, lived in the house on the hill; and it seemed he kept it blowing till he passed his father-in-law Lloyd Selby's house a little further down the Avenue. My father got an exhaust whistle for our Regal; but he did not drive as fast as Fred Wadleigh, the Regal did not have as much power and my father was not the noisy type. Nevertheless when you were riding in an automobile with such a whistle, it could be quite shrill on the ear drums. It was a supplement to the electric horn on the Regal when the storage battery was low. But the whistle would carbon up and lose its resonance and had to be taken off and cleaned. Fred Wadleigh must have tired of keeping it clean, or else he traded off the car and the whistle with it because his trips to town were not as noticeable after a while.

Ed Canet, who owned the Rancho Canada Larga o Verde, was a very likeable person when sober but periodically would drink too much. One evening shortly after my father and mother had bought their first car, we had gone for a ride about dusk up towards Foster Park and on our return passed a car with lights on, weaving all over the road. Along our way home we stopped at Louis Kohl's who lived on the opposite side of the road from Carl Hartman's house. He was a small time butcher and meat peddler and perhaps Louis had bought an animal from Ed. He had just been there. Louis asked my father if we had met Ed Canet on the road, and Father said he must have been the one who was weaving. Then Louis told Father about their conversation which must have gone like this: "It is getting dark Ed, you better light your lights." "I don't need lights, I got eyes like a cat." "I know you have Ed but other people don't, and you wouldn't want them running into you." "That is right," said Ed, "better light my lights." So Louis got out a match and lit the acetylene headlights.



Ventura & Ojai Valley Railroad

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Peg Percy on a horse

The train to Nordhoff in its earlier days gave service night and morning. It spent the night at Nordhoff where there was a turntable for the locomotive, and left early in the morning for Ventura. Sometimes in winter when it was dark we could see the lights in the coach as it went by the lower end of our place. It turned at the Y at Montalvo and returned to Nordhoff before noon, then down from Nordhoff after lunch and back to Nordhoff in the evening to spend the night. Mrs. Canet would sometimes take the train from Ventura back to the ranch. There was a siding called Weldons just back of the Canet ranch barn so she did not have far to walk. There was another siding up the track away called Canet, then La Crosse, Oak View, Tico, Matilija and Nordhoff. Nordhoff was the name of the town within the Ojai Valley. When my sister and I were still youngsters, Father drove Mother and us in the horse and buggy to Wheeler Hot Springs where Mother and we children spent several days there; then we left Wheelers via four-horse stage to the Matilija station where we caught the train to Chrisman, referred to then as the Gas Plant, where Father met us. The Southern Pacific ran two night trains between Los Angeles and San Francisco. The one that went up the valley was called the "Owl" and the one that went up the coast was called the "Lark"; the Nordhoff train was dubbed by some of us locals as the "Buzzard".

Some time along about 1914 to 1917 there was a campaign for 'Good Roads' and a bond issue was voted on and passed. I do not know the year they started paving Ventura Avenue but it seemed like a slow process. For kids living on the Avenue with a dirt path along one side, roller skates were out; but that did not keep us from wishing after seeing the kids in town skating on the cement sidewalks. We were waiting eagerly for any kind of cement so we could try out some skates ourselves.

The equipment for paving the road consisted of a one-cylinder road roller, a harrow and drag, a self-moving cement mixer that must have covered about half a yard at a time, about four wheel barrows and about eight or 10 teams with dump wagons and eight men working with the cement mixer. The roller pulled the harrow to loosen the dirt, then pulled the drag to level up the surface; and after two-by-four forms had been put in place, the loose dirt between was packed by the roller. The wagons left piles of sand and gravel and sacks of cement ahead of the cement mixer. The gravel was then shoveled into the wheelbarrows and moved by hand into the mixer. There was no reinforcement steel used in the pavement. The four inches of cement would keep the road smooth, dustless and no longer boggy in wet weather. After the concrete behind the cement mixer hardened, they covered it with dirt and built dikes to hold pools of water until it cured. To those of us waiting to enjoy the paving it seemed to take an awfully long time. Traffic had to keep to the side; and occasionally a dike would break during the night and the water would run into the dirt shoulder where the daily run would churn up mud holes. The paving finally cured and all the kids on the Avenue bought roller skates. Traffic was not so heavy that the pavement could not be shared among horses and wagons, automobiles and kids on roller skates, with considerable dirt on both sides for saddle horses.

When the county laid down the four inches of concrete, no one foresaw the oil boom that would come. While the wildcat wells drilled with standard tools were in vogue, the thin surface was subjected to no great load; but when the oil companies changed over to rotary rigs, they needed lots of mud and they hauled it from the Selby place where Rocklite later located. The trucks had solid rubber tires and hauled all they could hold; and it was not long before the orginal cement slab began breaking up. And the Avenue which had been a rural community also cracked up.

ALL SWIMMERS WELCOME TO THE RESERVOIR

By Eugene Foster Percy

If an archaeologist were to dig in the southwest corner of the present day Avenue School playground, he very likely would run across the remains of an iron pipe six or eight feet below the surface. It would be about two feet in diameter, run northeast to southwest and on the southwest end would be the remains of a concrete box. This pipe carried water from the concrete box to a clay lined million gallon reservoir about 30 feet away. The concrete box was originally about eight feet deep, seven or eight feet wide and 10 feet long. The top was covered with boards. This was the intake for a three foot pipe which was the penstock to the Ventura Land and Power Co.'s generators which were located where the Vetco Offshore plant is currently in operation on Stanley Lane.

The water for this reservoir and penstock was supplied by a flume from the Ventura River beginning near the present location of the Ventura Avenue Lemon Association packing house. The flume was made of redwood. It was seven feet wide and two feet deep and was tied across the top with two-by-four about every six feet. My first awareness of life was watching my father build a fence around the yard of the house in which I was born to keep me out of the flume. The water in the flume probably did not measure more than eight inches in depth but it had a swift enough current to sweep a two-year-old child off its feet and carry him clear to the weir box. That happened to one from the 'Spanish houses' just above us which prompted my father to build the fence. The flume was only a couple of hundred feet from our back door.

The flume in its route to the reservoir passed under the county road about the center of where the oil field is today, swung over next to the hill and was supported on stilts as it came around the side of Gosnell Hill. It crossed back to the west side of the Avenue at Gosnell Bend, sometimes referred to as Two Mile Bend. It then crossed the point running out towards the river, then followed the brow of an old river terrace past our house and my grandfather's house, under his woodshed and carriage shed, under my grandmother's milk room and the Chinese cook's quarters and a hundred yards further on emptied into the weir box at the head of the penstock. The surplus water backed up into the reservoir or flowed into a spillway that emptied into a barranca.

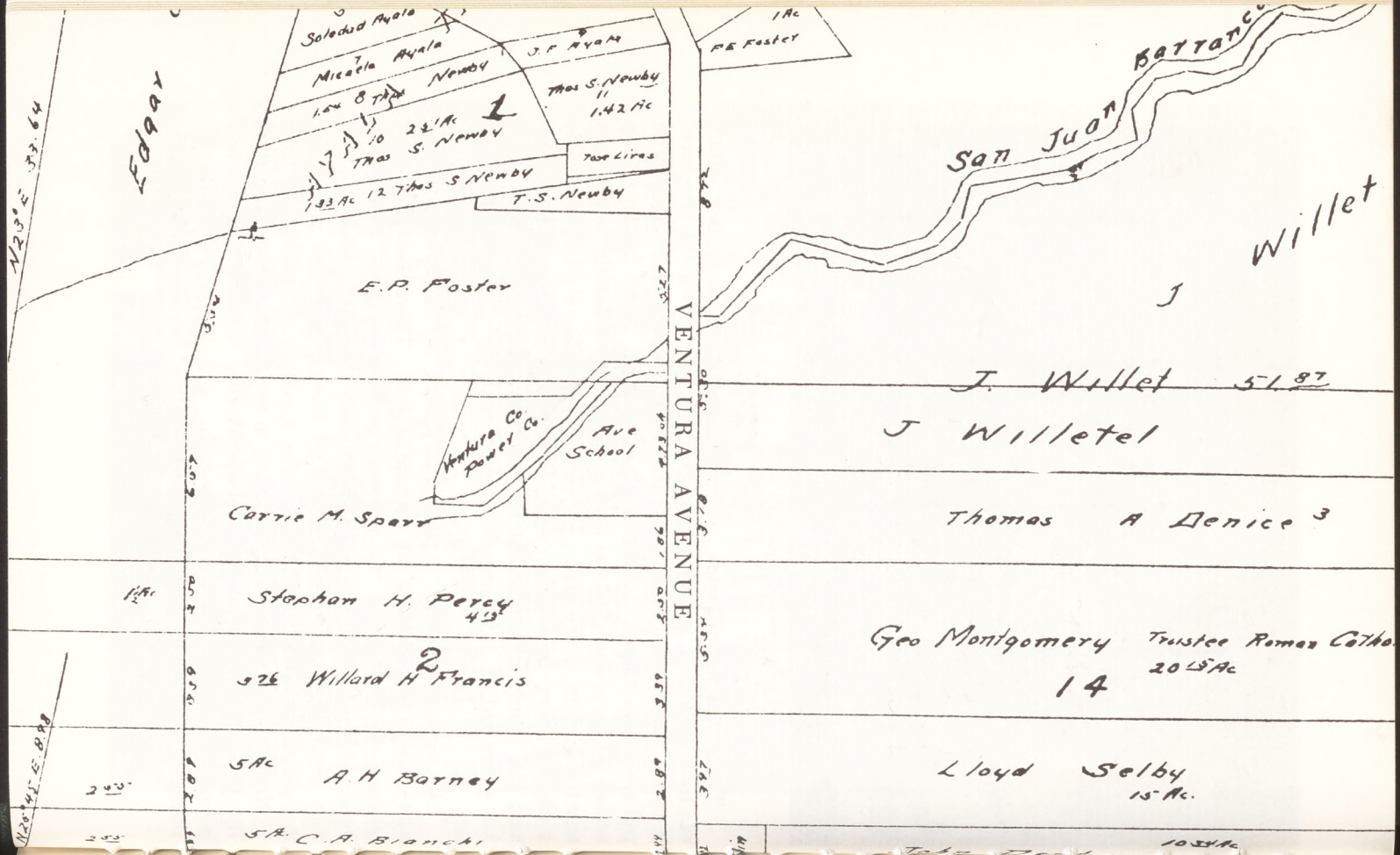
Five boys in the middle: Ted Fulkerson, Clyde Bucher, Adolpho Smith, Jim Fulkerson and Alfred Hartman

S. H. Percy home

There was a grill work made of laths at the weir box which was to keep leaves and other trash from going down the penstock. It was the ditch tender's duty to rake out the leaves every day. The grill work was sloped to make for easy raking. One day when my mother was a young girl, she took a rake to see what she might find near the bottom of the grill. On her first try she raked up a sizable steelhead trout. From then on whenever the steelhead were running, the family did their fishing that way. Up until I was about four years old, I can remember going with my father to rake for fish.

A year or two before I started to school, my father and mother built a house just south of the Avenue School. There was a barranca between our house and the reservoir so there was no need for a fence to keep me away from the flume and reservoir. I used to run away down the road to play with Jack Dent. Jack was one of my first playmates as a child, but he was a couple of years older than I. Nevertheless, we started first grade in the Avenue School together. The James Fulkerson and the Harle Walker families had recently moved out to The Avenue from town; and James Fulkerson Jr., Theodore Fulkerson and Raymond Walker became schoolmates.

Five boys in the middle: Ted Fulkerson, Clyde Bucher, Adolpho Smith, Jim Fulkerson and Alfred Hartman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Thomas A Denice 3
Stephan H. Percy
4.3
1½ Ac
2
3.26 Willard H Francis
Geo Montgomery Trustee Roman Catho
20.45 Ac
14
5 Ac A. H Barney
Lloyd Selby
15 Ac.
5 Ac C. A. Bianchi
10.34 Ac
N20°41' E 8.88

'Dammers'

and

Swimmers

Theodore was in the second grade when Jack Dent and I were in the first grade and the three of us got the idea that we would dam up the barranca below the spillway from the flume and make a swimming pool. Such a grandiose scheme! The only thing we had to dam it with was mud but we did get the water deep enough to wade in. The older boys heard about our project and came to take part in the enterprise. It was not long before they stripped off their clothes and were wallowing in the water. About that time the power plant began using more water and the spillway into the barranca stopped flowing so the water behind the dam ran low. The older boys sneaked up to the reservoir which was concealed from

Reservoir, with the barranca on the left and the flume on the right.

E. P. Foster home

Reservoir, with the barranca on the left and the flume on the right.

every place around except my grandparents' upstairs windows, and at that time of day no one was upstairs, and they started paddling around the edge. They found that by kicking their feet it kept their bodies horizontal; and since the sides of the reservoir were sloping and they could keep their hands barely touching the side, they had the elements of the dog paddle. It was not long after that the older boys were swimming in deep water and we younger ones were too, but close to shore. A few years later a wood stave pipe was laid down the Avenue and connected into what had been the penstock, and the old flume was no longer used.

The flume and reservoir had been a project of the Santa Ana Water Co., organized in 1870. My grandfather, the late E. P. Foster, took a job with them when he came off the Conejo following the dry year of 1877 when he lost all his sheep from drouth. He started as a ditch tender. The organizers had to sell their property to clear up debts in 1879, and it fell into the hands of outsiders.* My wife and I are in possession of a high back desk with many pockets, drawers and other cubby holes which my grandfather used all through his banking years (1890-1917) and then took into his home. In one of the cubby holes is a hand written notation that reads:

Miss
O. W.
(Pearl)
Foster

This desk given to E. P. Foster in 1888 by the Bradley Estate, owners of the Santa Ana Water Co., for his faithful years as manager.

When Southern California Edison Co. took over from the Ventura County Power Co., the reservoir and its water was in their care briefly before the City of Ventura took it over and Ed Orton became superintendent. The reservoir would be full one day and perhaps empty the next depending on the amount of irrigation that took place. It was used for swimming as late as 1927. Edson Johnson, one of my classmates in school, had a canvas canoe which we paddled in the reservoir if the weather was too cool for swimming. It was still an unfenced reservoir with no signs prohibiting swimming. Along in the early 1930's the city deeded the reservoir land back to Grandfather's estate and the reservoir was filled in and planted to lemons. When my aunt O. W. (Pearl) Foster moved to town to live, she sold the property to the Avenue School District so they could enlarge the school grounds.

**VCHSQ*, v. 4, no. 3, p. 3-4 (May 1959)

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Janss Foundation. The company began its first real estate development activities in 1889. Operations were moved to the Conejo Valley in 1954 with offices in Thousand Oaks and Newbury Park.

Bank of A. Levy, 143 W. Fifth St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception the Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

Noyes Plumbing Co., 1718 E. Main St., Ventura. Established by Bert Wigton and Joseph Noyes in 1924 in the old Hamilton Hotel Bldg., to serve Ventura County.

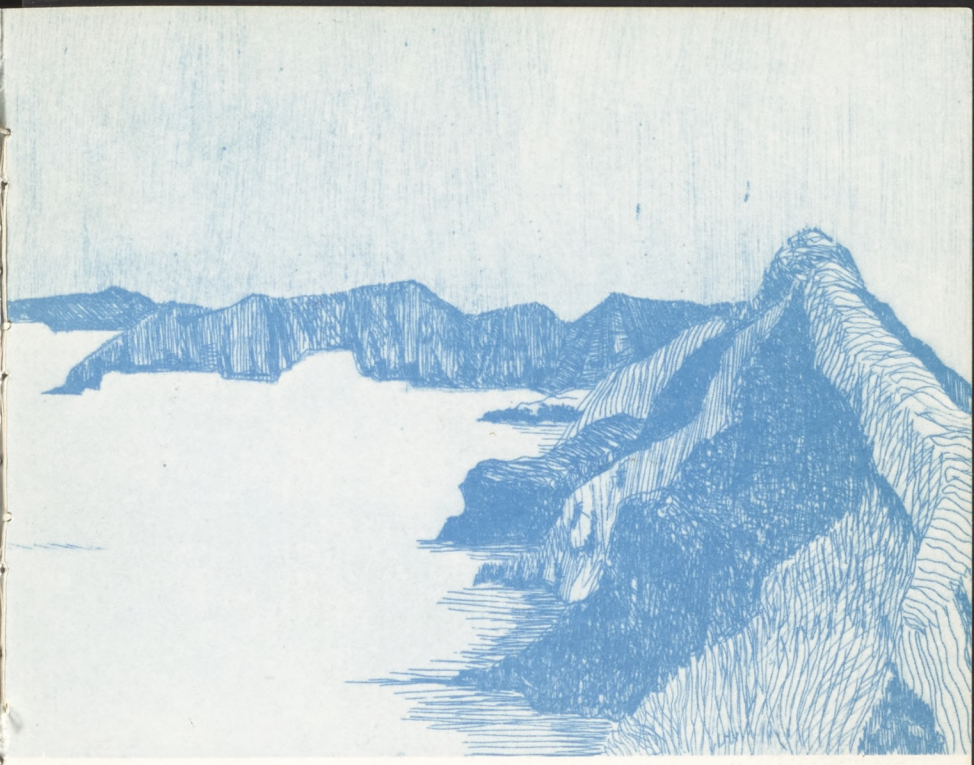
Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.

Safeco Title Insurance Company. Successor to Security Title Co., has been insuring title to California properties since 1920 and headquartered in Ventura since 1959.

Santa Barbara Savings and Loan Association, organized September 21, 1887, was the first savings and loan association established in the city of Ventura. The Ventura branch office was opened in June 1944 with H. R. Holst as manager and Janet Walker as assistant and later moved to its present location at 92 South Chestnut Street.

Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association. Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J. R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. This organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

Vetco, Inc., 250 W. Stanley Ave., Ventura, started as Ventura Tool Co. in 1923 and has expanded from two men to over 2500 employees. Fritz Huntsinger is Chairman of the Board of Directors.



Paula Odor

Ventura County Historical Society QUARTERLY

Vol. XXIII, No. 3 Spring 1978

Ventura County Historical Society

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The Ventura County Historical Society's headquarters is the Ventura County Historical Museum, 100 E. Main, Ventura, California. Annual memberships for husband and wife are active ($10) and sustaining ($25), for business ($25) and student ($3); and life ($500).

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The
Ventura County Historical Society
Quarterly

Vol. XXIII, No. 3 Spring 1978

Grant W. Heil, Editor

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U. S. Coast Survey

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FRENCHIE
By Karen Jones Dowty

Notice

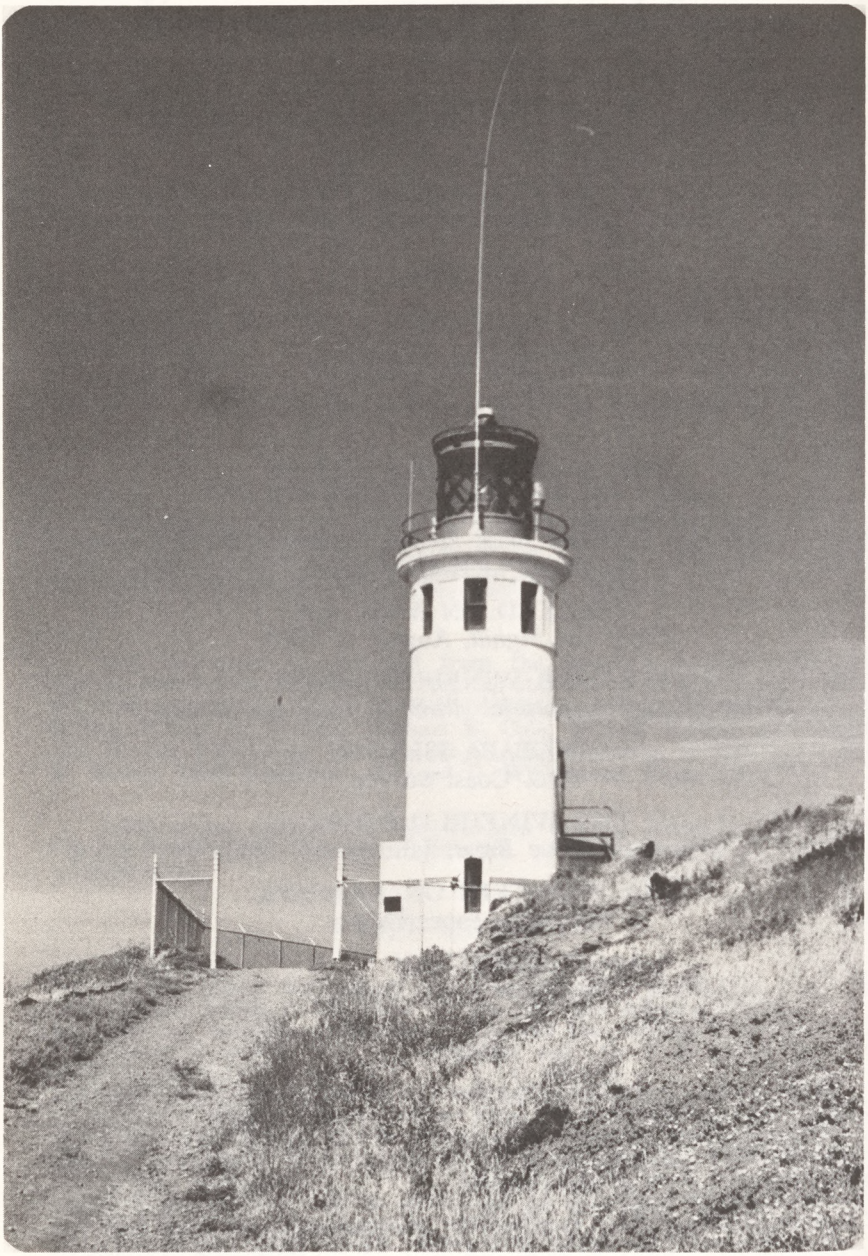
Karen Jones Dowty has long been a sailor of the Santa Barbara Channel in preparation for her book on the Channel Islands.

The differences between the accounts of two survivors of the wreck of the Winfield Scott are usual in the testimony of witnesses. William A. Lucking, Jr., collected the material.

The Pennells' biography is the source of the research on Whistler. The younger son, Harvey, supplied the information on the Websters.

Bill Aplin took the aerial photograph; Robert Love gave the ones of Frenchie; and the others are by Mrs. Dowty.

Mike Cole redrew the sketch of the steamer; and the etching on the cover is by Paula Odor.



Anacapa Lighthouse

THE ANACAPA LIGHTHOUSE

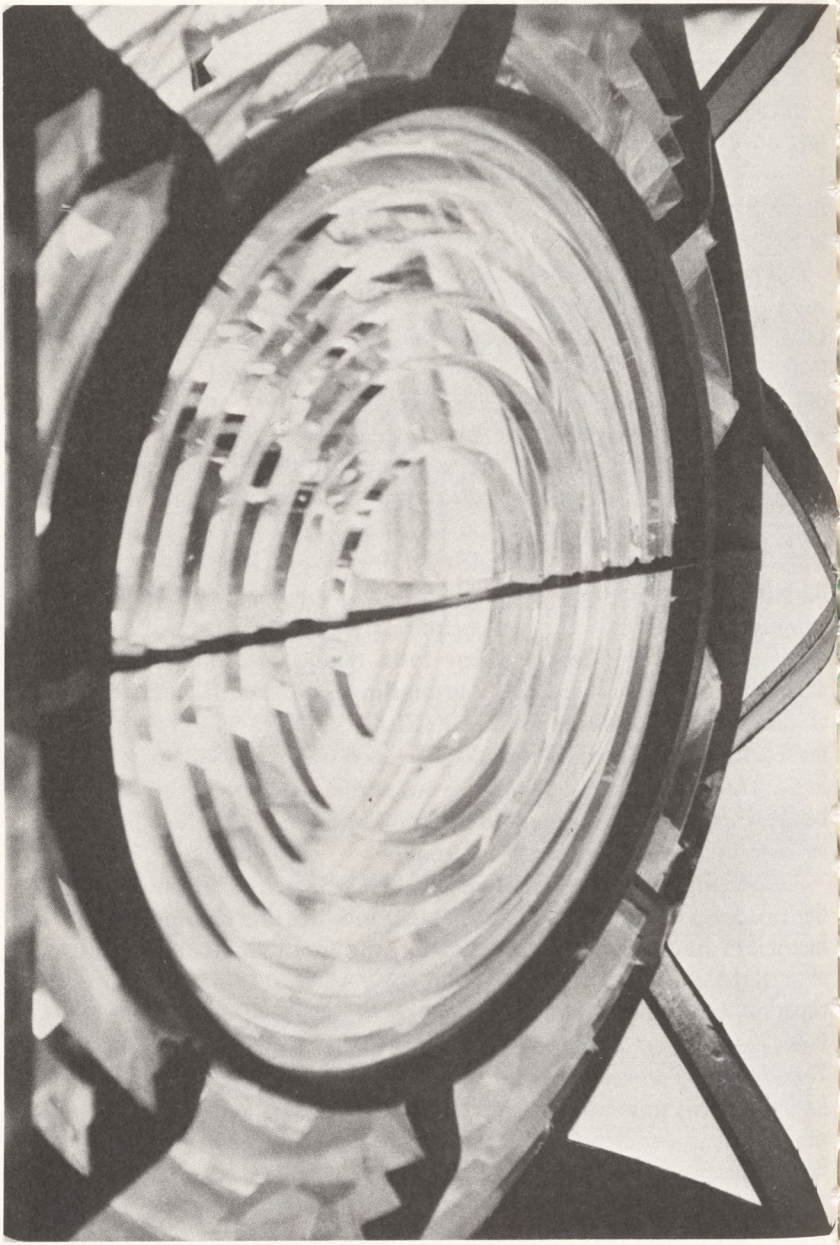
By Karen Jones Dowty

High above the splashing surf at Anacapa Island's east end is a beacon guiding mariners navigating the California coast, the Anacapa Lighthouse. One of the last and most essential of the West coast lighthouses, the traditional white cylindrical structure was erected in 1932.

The first lighted aids to mariners in the Santa Barbara Channel were fires maintained on exposed promontories of Santa Cruz Island. Like the Egyptian and Roman beacons, they guided the Chumash fishing and trading canoes at night. It is believed that these Indians did most of their travelling by water after dark when the westerly wind had died down and the sea was calmer.

Starting with the first European explorations of the western Pacific coast, the islands were more of a hindrance to navigation than anything else. The Spanish galleons on the Manila route gave them a wide berth. But later American ships, using the convenient Santa Barbara Channel, took their chances of grounding on one of these sea-girded mountain tops. Precipitously dense fogs that often shroud the islands and the channel they form made this course all the more dangerous. There were many groundings, the most famous being that of the sidewheel steamer WINFIELD SCOTT which crashed onto the rocks of Anacapa the night of December 2, 1853 in a pea soup fog. The 250 passengers and crew waited ashore eight days before being rescued; they scavanged for food and were afforded little shelter on that nearly barren series of rocks.

The plight of the WINFIELD SCOTT helped draw attention to the need for a lighthouse at this entrance to the channel. But with financial forces and a survey showing the impossibility of construction of a lighthouse above East Anacapa's sheer cliffs then, a smaller, cheaper and less effective beacon was built across the channel at Point Hueneme.[1] Shipping traffic continued to increase geometrically. Finally the Bureau of Lighthouses was allocated monies in 1912 for a skeleton tower supporting an unmanned beacon near the present site. It was replaced in 1932 by the structure we see today. This lighthouse was staffed by four Coast Guardsmen; they lived on East Anacapa with their families. After automation of the lighthouse in 1968-9, all of the dwellings but one were razed. It is now used and maintained by Channel Islands National Monument rangers.

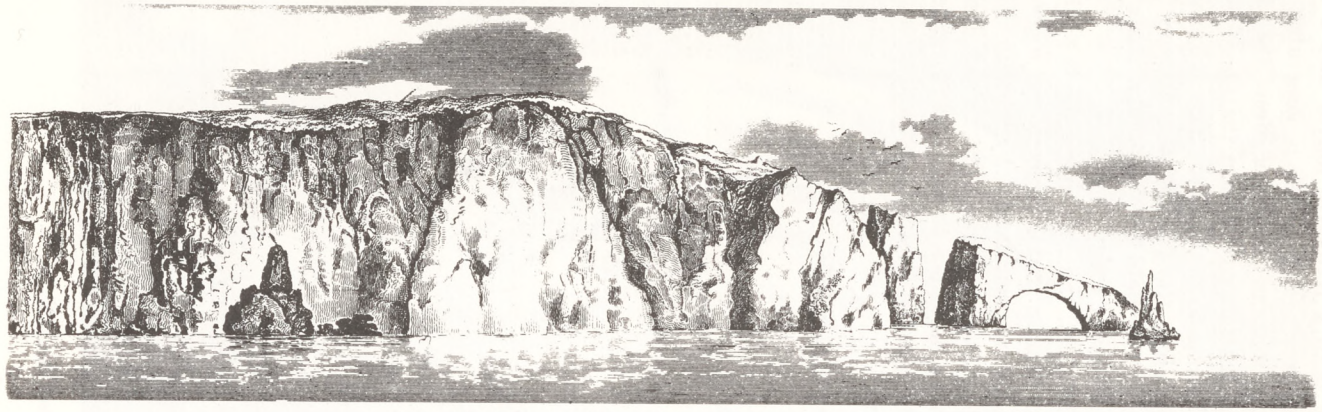


Fresnel lens

The catadioptric light (using both a reflective mirror and a refractive lens) is 1,200,000 candlepower. The power is generated in a nearby outbuilding. About four thousand gallons of diesel are consumed per year, a mere pittance to pay to guide ships that each consume five times that quantity of bunker fuel per day. The refractive lens is the classic type invented before the turn of the century by Augustin–Jean Fresnel, a pioneer in the field of optics who also designed the lens integral to most cameras today.

Perched at an elevation of 277 feet, the Anacapa light is visible for 24 miles and houses a radio beacon and an electronic foghorn that can be heard along the adjacent mainland. Visitors to East Anacapa are cautioned against approaching too close to the lighthouse because the automatic foghorn can cause serious and permanent damage to one's hearing. The lighthouse is maintained and checked by Coast Guard personnel at Oxnard.

[1] *VCHSQ*, June 1967 (v. 12, #3, p. 12, 17, 20-5)



View of the Eastern extremity of Anacapa Island – from the Southward

Engd by J.A. Whistler, J. Young & C.A. Knight

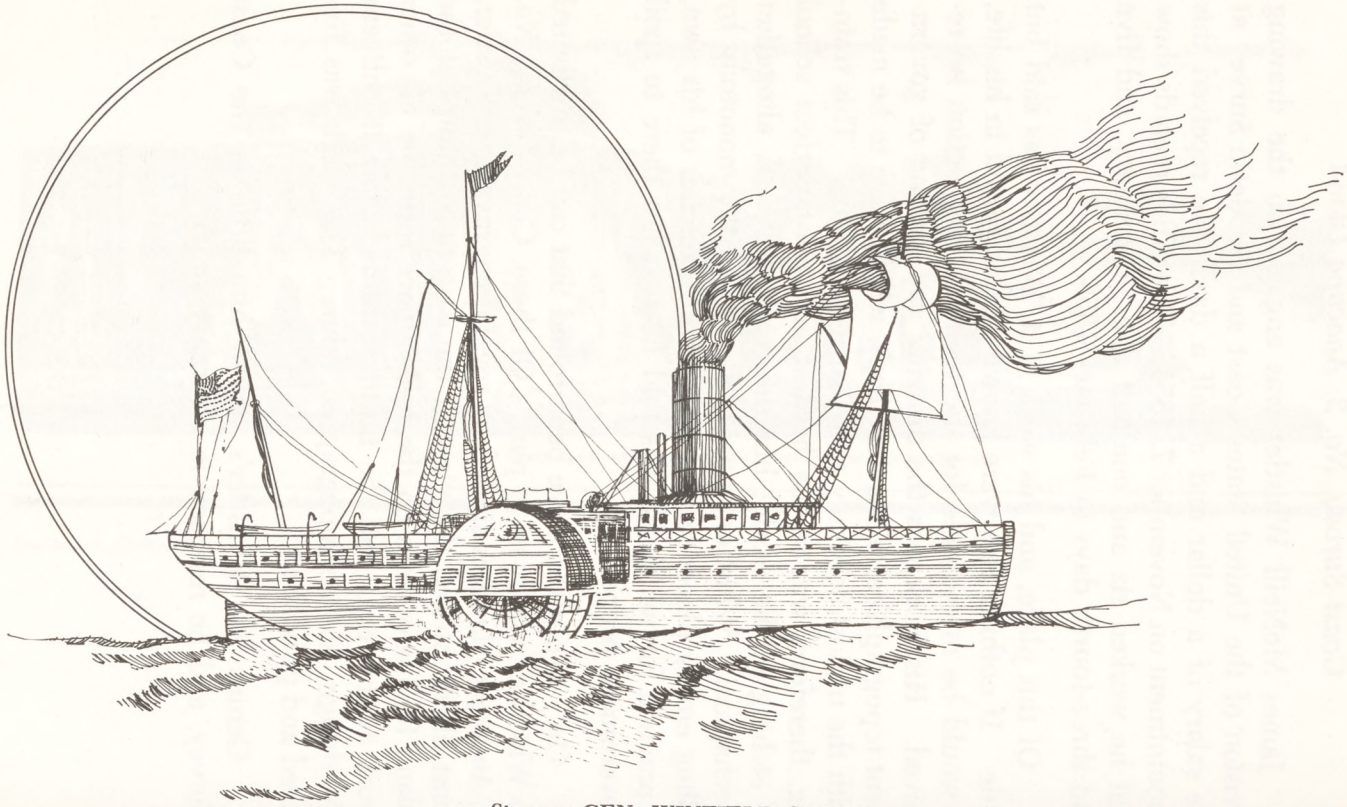
Coast Survey, No. 2; Anacapa Island

James McNeill Whistler was engaged in the drawing division of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey at the salary of a dollar and a half a day. He received this appointment on November 7, 1854. The office records show that he worked six and one-half days in January, and five and three-fourth days in February 1855.

Of this place, and his work in it, Whistler has said but little. If nothing else were known of this period in his life, it would be memorable for the technical instruction he received. His work was the drawing and etching of government topographical plans and maps, which have to be made with the utmost accuracy and sharpness of line. This training, therefore, was in the hardest and most perfect school of etching in the world; but the work was dull, altogether mechanical. Whistler sometimes relieved the monotony by filling empty places on the plates with sketches of his own, a practice for which he was told he was not there to spoil government property.

Only two plates have been found that can be attributed to Whistler, wholly or in part. Of these, *Coast Survey, No. 2, Anacapa Island,* is signed by several engravers. Whistler, most likely, etched the view of the eastern extremity of the island for many lines on the rocky shore resemble his other work at this time and the flight of birds, while it enlivens the design, has no topographic value. This work was finished and published.

Genius like Whistler's served him little in the Coast Survey, and he resigned in February 1855.



Steamer **GEN. WINFIELD SCOTT**

WRECKED ON ANACAPA

The story of the wreck of the Panama Steamship WINFIELD SCOTT in sight of Santa Barbara, nearly 30 years ago, has just been given to the public by a survivor of the wreck, Charles P. Holden, who writes to the Chicago *Times*. The WINFIELD SCOTT with 200 passengers for Panama went on the rocks of Anacapa Island. Captain Blunt, who commanded the steamer, had decided that the Santa Barbara Channel was the shortest cut to Panama. From Mr. Holden's story the following condensation is made:

Our steamer took the inside track, or the Santa Barbara Channel; and the night of December 1 and the day of December 2 passed pleasantly. Early in the day we could with field glasses see the steamships of other lines or companies at a great distance to the west of us; they too were making for Panama but had taken the old, safe outside track. As it appeared we certainly would beat them into Panama by from 12 to 20 hours, which was worth saving to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. On the night of December 2, soon after supper, a dense fog set in. We were then off Santa Barbara, steaming along finely; but the fog came, and such a fog too. The passengers, however, gave no heed to it, not dreaming of danger; and the ship glided swiftly along over the smooth sea. The hours passed pleasantly; and by 10 o'clock, or perhaps a little longer, most of the passengers had retired to their staterooms for the night, unconscious of the danger that was soon to overtake them. At about the time the passengers retired there was a great commotion among the officers of the ship, and orders were quickly given to the man at the helm; and I presume the course of the steamer was somewhat changed, as it was quickly rumored that we had barely escaped a point of rocks making out from the Island of Santa Cruz. The officers again settled down quite at ease though it could be seen they were vigilant and at their post of duty. The steamer sped on through a fog so dense it would seem that one could cut it with a knife, so thick and heavy did it appear, when about 11 o'clock all hands were aroused as if by magic for the ship when under full headway had run upon the rocks. Instantly as it would seem the deck was covered with the passengers, every stateroom being at once emptied of its inmates seeking for safety upon the ship's deck. All knew as if by instinct that some terrible calamity had befallen the steamer. Men,

women and children were there in one common mass. The clear voice of the captain could be distinctly heard as he gave his orders pertaining to the saving of the lives of those on board, and also as to the handling of the ship then foundering on the rocks. As if by intuition the captain found that she had struck the lower edge of a slanting ledge of rocks; and he gave immediate orders to the engineer to force her on this ledge as far as possible and then, remembering the fate of the passenger steamer INDEPENDENCE, ordered the fires under the boilers at once put out that the rush of water into the engine room and suddenly upon the fires might not precipitate a fire and thus burn up what was left of the sinking ship, as was the case a short time before. Life preservers were fastened around each passenger, and all on board were preparing for the worst.

The dashing of the waves against the rocks, and the sure sinking of the steamer or going to pieces in that dense fog, was well calculated to alarm the strongest heart. Some were praying and others imploring to be saved from a watery grave which at that time bid fair to engulf us all. It was a fearful time, a time of terrible suspense.

The cool-headed were actively at work getting ready for the tussle with the water when driven to it, by arranging different kinds of material (like cabin-door, chairs, and other material) for rafts and floats. One genial gentleman who had his wife and family on board was nearly distracted. He ran up and down the deck like one beside himself while his wife was as cool as the coolest, counseling all those near her to be calm and to be sure and obey the orders of the captain of the boat. I think his name was Diamond, a merchant of New York City. The captain knew that some unknown current had taken the steamer out of its course; but where he then was, he could not tell for you could not see half the ship's length, so dense was the fog. A boat had been dispatched to feel around among the rocks and to find a place to land the passengers, provided the vessel did not go to pieces in the meantime. It returned and reported favorably, then the debarcation commenced. The boats which had been filled with women, children and the sick were first taken to the spot of rescue, then the passengers in general; and it was but a very short time before all were landed on the rocks where they climbed far above the water's edge, thankful beyond measure that they had

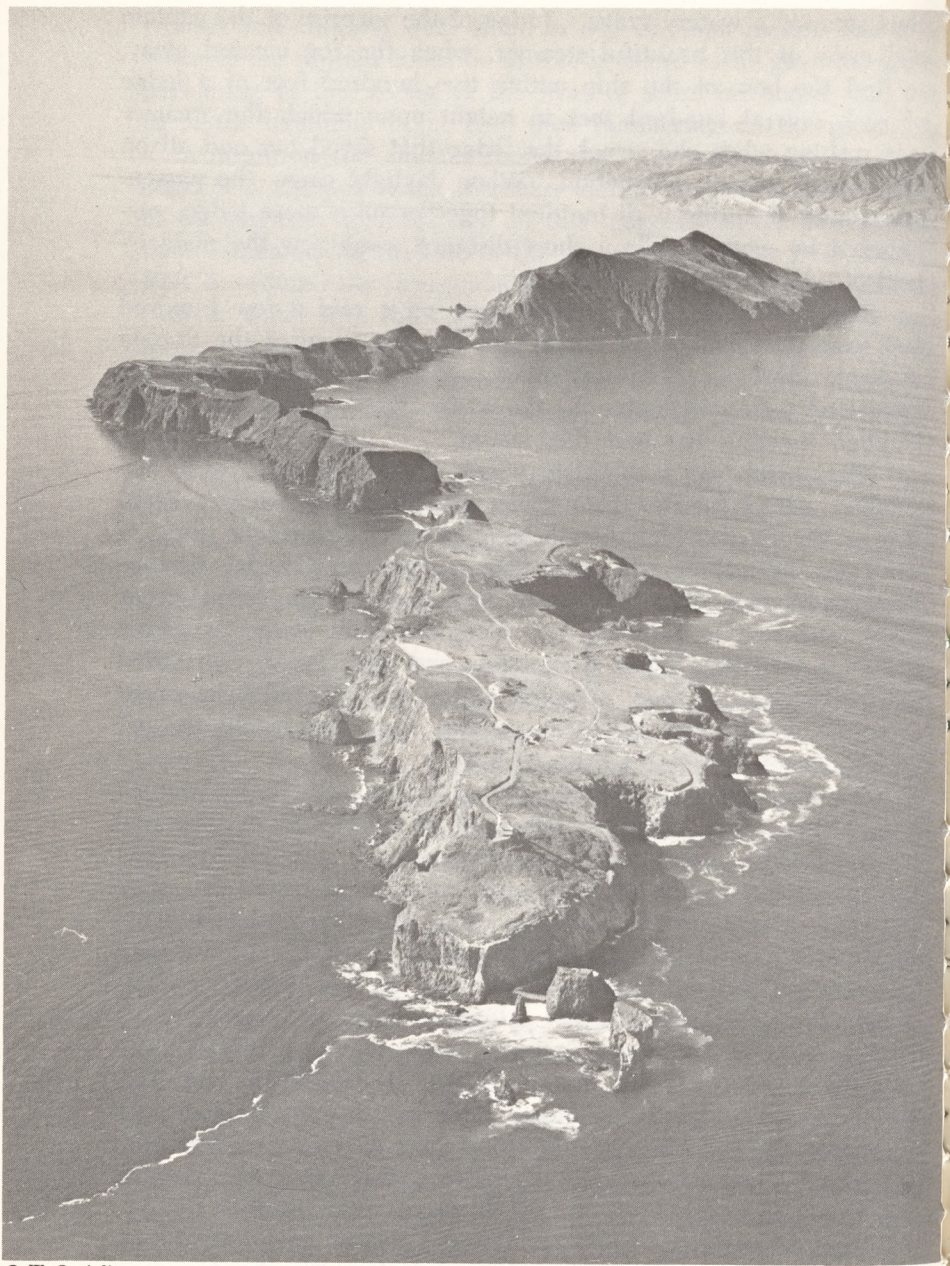
thus escaped a watery grave. Judge of the surprise of the captain and crew of this beautiful steamer, when the fog cleared away, to find the bow of the ship within two hundred feet of a ledge of rock several hundred feet in height upon which the steamer was rushing when she struck the ledge that saved her and all on board from instant destruction. When daylight came, the passengers found themselves all huddled together on a mere ledge, surrounded by water, while a short distance away was the main island of which this spur was a part.

The captain found that they were on a reef a few hundred feet from Anacapa Island which was in plain view of the Pueblo of Santa Barbara. The passengers were transferred with what provisions were obtainable to the main island where the crowd huddled together the best they could.

The vessel was a complete wreck. The captain at once dispatched a boat for the main shore with dispatches to San Fransico to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, informing them of our fate and calling for immediate assistance; but the distance being more than 400 miles, it took time to reach San Francisco as there were neither railroads nor telegraph from lower California to the metropolis. When these steps had been taken, we settled down to abide our time. We felt happy that we had been saved from the wreck; and now the question was, how could we get away from our miserable little island?

Our first meal on the island was doled out to us about 10 a.m., December 3, 1853. It consisted of such food as they had been enabled to save, and it was good enough; the only question was whether it would hold out until help would reach us. After this we scattered among the rocks, all scanning the ocean for help. At about 3 p.m. of that day, December 3, one of the regular mail steamers was seen in the distance *en route* for San Francisco. The signal of distress attracted her attention, when a captain with a boat came to us, not daring to come nearer than a couple of miles with the steamer. It was the steamship CALIFORNIA, and Captain Leroy was her commander. She was heavily loaded with passengers for San Francisco, but took some of the passengers from our island home back to San Francisco; and among the number Mr. Diamond and his family. Then we awaited results.

The shipwrecked crowd on Anacapa waited anxiously for relief from San Francisco. It was the eighth day after the departure



© W. C. Aplin

Aerial view of Anacapa Island from the east

of the CALIFORNIA before assistance arrived. In the meantime the provisions and water had been exhausted, and the situation was desperate. On the morning of the eighth day (December 10, 1853) the report of a cannon was heard on the island. Instantaneously as it seemed, the crowd hurrahed, screamed and yelled for joy. Assistance was close at hand, so we all thought. As it was quite dark, large piles of seagrass were lighted, and the gun which had been taken from the wreck made answer in tones of thunder. The little island seemed alive at that moment, then came a lull for 10 minutes and the time seemed an hour, when all began to think the report was from the shore which was nearly 20 miles away. Suddenly there came another report, and then another. The gun on the island was making answer, and the little party shouted as none but those in dire distress could shout. The firing of the cannon from the island and the shouting continued with casual reports from the ship of succor until in the early mist of the morning the little steamer came in full view, feeling her way towards us, and when within about a mile and a half her boats were manned and dispatched to our rescue.

The nearly starving passengers and crew, nearly 300 in all, were taken off the island and taken to Panama where they raised a subscription for the purpose of presenting a silver service to Captain Leroy who had saved them from death by starvation. Such is the story of a wreck in the Santa Barbara Channel 30 years ago, and long before newspapers had been presented in this city or county.

It is not generally known that the eagle which ornamented the front of Lobero's Theatre, Santa Barbara is a relic of the wrecked Panama steamer WINFIELD SCOTT which struck upon the rocks on Anacapa Island thirty years ago. It was the only piece of the steamer which was saved.

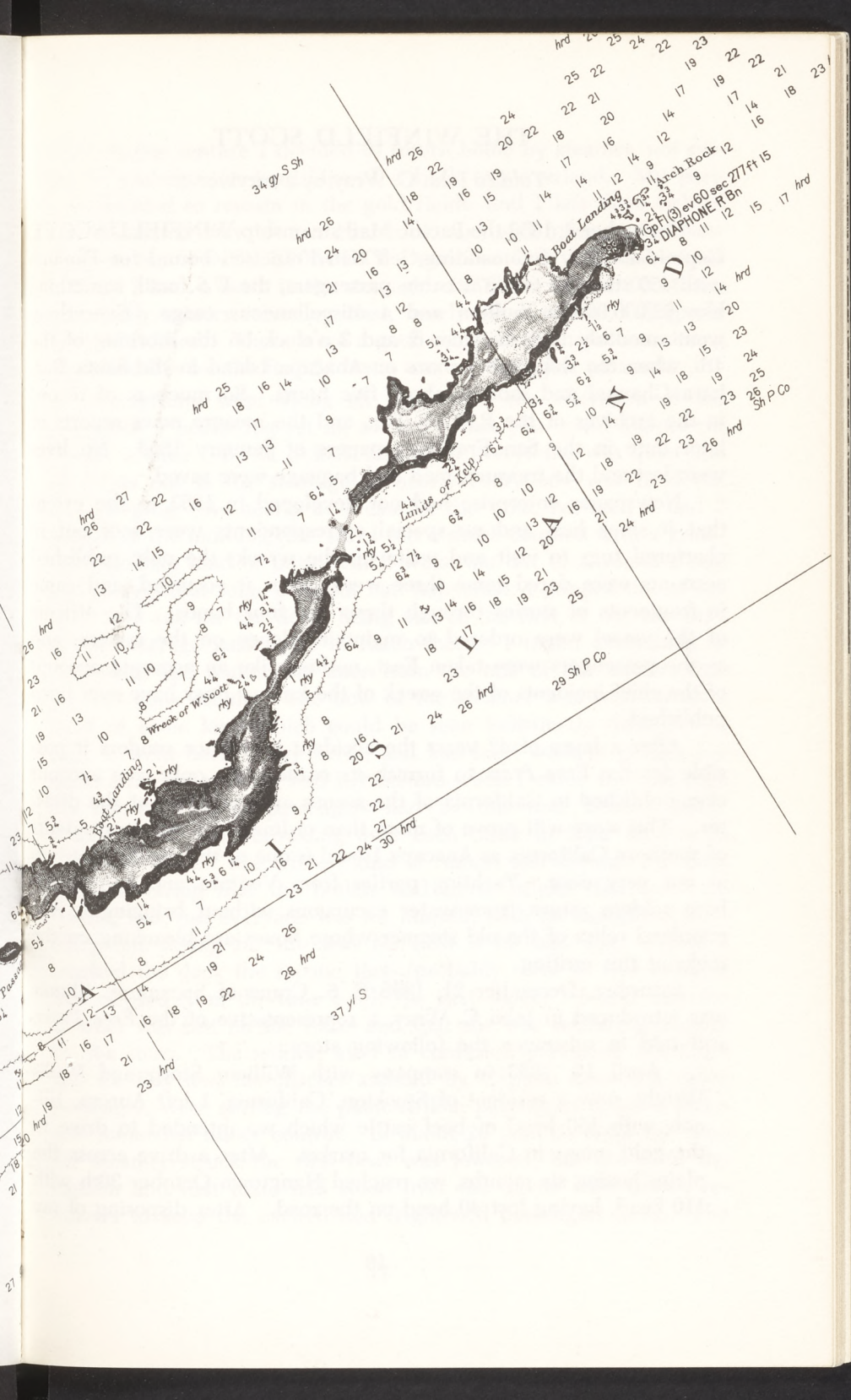
—*Signal*, August 4, 1883

CALIFORNIA
ANACAPA ISLAND

Scale $\frac{1}{30000}$

SOUNDINGS IN FATHOMS
AT MEAN LOWER LOW WATER

Surveys to 1876


Boat Landing
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DIAPHONE R Bn
Limits of Kelp
Wreck of W. Scott
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THE WINFIELD SCOTT

Told to John C. Wray by a survivor

December 2, 1853 the Pacific Mail steamship WINFIELD SCOTT, Captain Le Roy commanding, left San Francisco bound for Panama with 450 steerage and 375 cabin passengers, the U.S. mail, something like $2,000,000 in bullion and a miscellaneous cargo. Everything went smoothly until between 2 and 3 o'clock on the morning of the 4th, when the ship went ashore on Anacapa Island in the Santa Barbara Channel and sank in about five hours. So much is of record in the archives of the P.M.S.S. Co., and the meagre news reports of later date in the San Francisco papers of January 1853. No lives were lost and the treasure, mail and baggage were saved.

Newspaper enterprise had not developed in 1853 to the extent that it since has; and no special correspondents were sent out in chartered tugs to visit and write up the wreck; the only published accounts were dated some three weeks after it occurred, and came in fragments of stories through three and four hands. The officers of the vessel were ordered to maintain silence on the matter; and as the passengers were taken East, nothing like an accurate account of the chief incidents of the wreck of the famous liner have ever been published.

After a lapse of 42 years the accident of chance renders it possible for the *Free Press* to furnish its readers the only true account ever published in California of the scenes and incidents of the disaster. This story will prove of more than ordinary interest to residents of southern California as Anacapa Island is one of the historical group at our very door. Yachting parties from Ventura and Santa Barbara seldom return from water excursions without bringing to the mainland relics of the old steamer whose bones are bleaching on the rocks at this writing.

Saturday, December 21, 1895 F. S. Crane of Sycamore, Illinois was introduced to John C. Wray, a representative of the *Free Press*, and told in substance the following story:

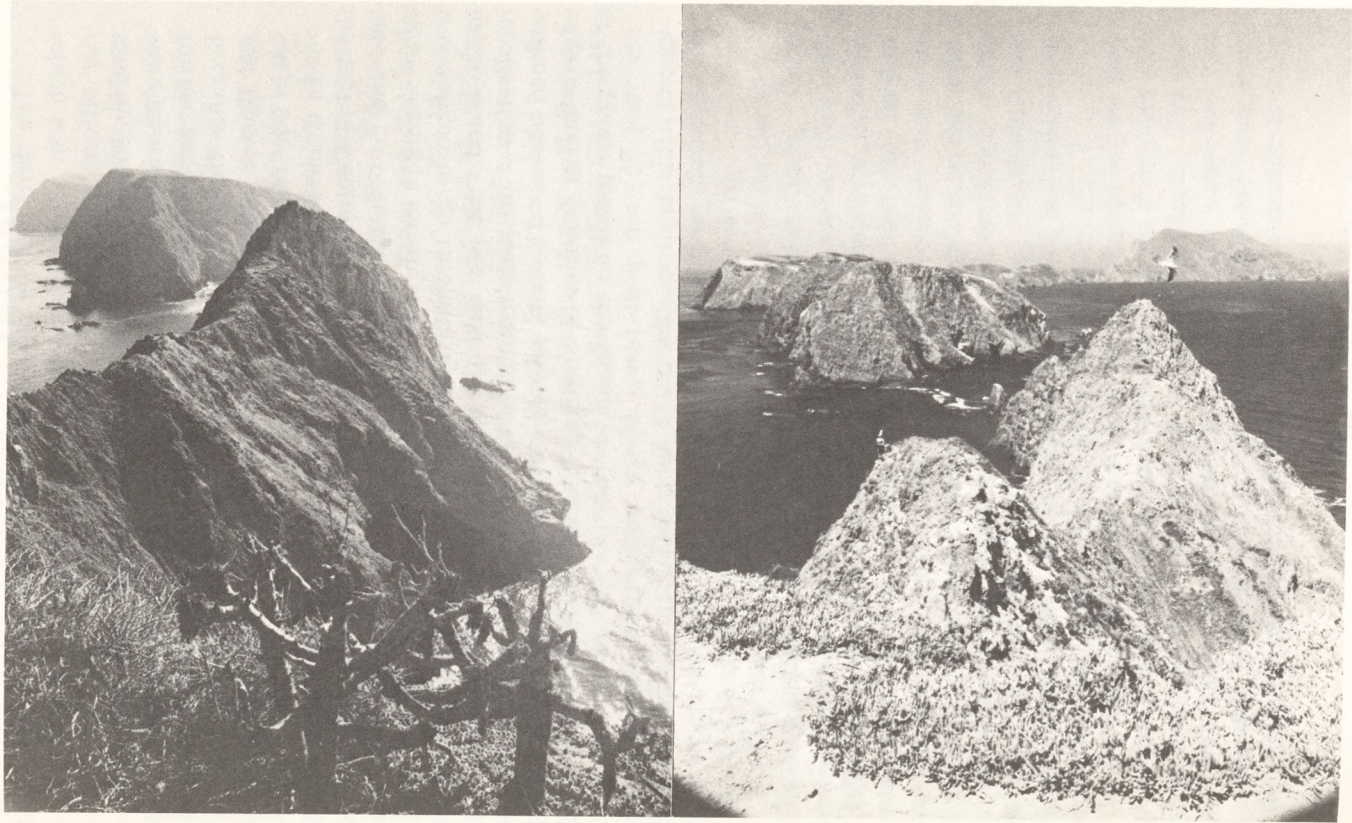
> April 14, 1853 in company with William Storp and Willis Wright, now a resident of Stockton, California, I left Aurora, Illinois with 150 head of beef cattle which we intended to drive to the gold mines in California for market. After a drive across the plains lasting six months, we reached Hangtown October 30th with 110 head, having lost 40 head on the road. After disposing of my

share in the venture I decided to return home by steamer, not caring to undergo the hardships of a back trip overland. My partners decided to remain in the gold fields; and I left them behind and made my way to San Francisco, and took passage for New York on the WINFIELD SCOTT December 2nd. The cabin was full and I took a berth in the steerage with about 350 to 400 others, principally miners returning East, nearly all of whom had specie belts well-filled. There were a good many hard characters among them and life for the first 24 hours was anything but pleasant.

Everything went along all right until the afternoon of the 3rd when a heavy fog set in, so heavy that you could almost cut it with a knife. By 11 o'clock that night everything was quiet and all lights out in the steerage as nearly everybody was tired out and sleeping. As nearly as I can fix the time, between 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning (the 4th) I felt a shock coupled with a grinding, crushing kind of noise which woke me out of a sound sleep; and feeling that some accident had happened, I jumped out of my bunk and ran for the deck, being one of the first, if not the first, of the steerage passengers to reach there. I found everything in confusion, and realized at once from the talk of the officers that we had gone ashore. The bow of the steamer was well up on a bank of some kind which could be seen indistinctly through the fog. I went back to my berth, and had hard work in getting my shoes and coat which I had left behind when I made the first rush for the deck. The passengers had by this time become panic stricken, and were crowding over each other in their anxiety to reach the deck. The wildest kind of rumors ran through the ship, some declaring that the boilers had burst, others that we were sinking fast; but everyone was for himself, with no thought of anything but saving his life and his dust if he had any. When I reached the deck the second time (probably three to five minutes had elapsed from the time I felt the first shock) I found that the steamer was fast on the rocks and that she was settling gradually by the stern. The wildest kind of confusion prevailed; but Captain Le Roy and his officers assisted by Captain Brown, a cabin passenger, were getting the panic-striken passengers quieted down and somewhat under control. In about 20 minutes from the time the steamer struck the first boat was lowered; but not until the captain and first mate had stood over the davits with drawn revolvers to keep the excited and frightened passengers back. The

boat was manned by four of the crew and one of the mates, with instructions to find out how close the ship lay to land and discover, if possible, a landing place for the boats. The boat came back in about five minutes and reported a safe landing close at hand, on what appeared to be an island. From remarks which I overheard afterwards I believe the captain thought he was ashore on Santa Cruz Island. As soon as the captain was satisfied that a landing was possible, he ordered the boats lowered and the passengers transferred to the shore. By this time the panic had subsided as the vessel remained fast on the rocks as though in a cradle, and the transfer was made rapidly and safely. The women, children and sick persons, of which there were quite a number, being first looked after. By daylight everybody was safe on shore, or what appeared to be the shore, but which in reality was a rock lying close to the main island.

With daylight the fog lifted and for the first time the officers knew where they were. A second transfer from the rock to the island was made and we went into camp for the eight days and a half which we were obliged to pass on the island. The first day a boat with four men was dispatched to the mainland with instructions to make their way overland to the nearest point from which word could be wired to San Francisco. We saw them start for the mainland but never learned of their arrival. The captain and crew worked hard and got on shore nearly all of the mail matter, bullion and baggage, over which a guard was placed, as the rowdy element among the passengers began to manifest itself as soon as the first panic subsided and before the passengers had been transferred to the land. An Irishman and a Negro were caught in the act of cutting open carpet bags in the cabin. They were ironed and carried ashore for trial. We immediately formed a vigilance committee and appointed a police patrol of the camp with Captain Brown as chief. The two thieves were tried; and an example made of them for the benefit of the rowdy element who showed a decided disposition to run things their own way. The two men were stripped, spread-eagled on the sand and whipped by Captain Brown in person. Every time he brought the rope down, he brought blood. It was a fearful spectacle but it had the desired effect, and no more rowdyism or thieving occurred. Our provisions were scanty; during the last two days we were forced to issue short rations, but everything considered we got along fairly well.



Looking west into fog and sun

The third day we sighted the Pacific Mail steamer ILLINOIS which sent a boat ashore, learned our condition and took one of our officers and a few passengers, and left for San Francisco to send us succor. The morning of the 13th she returned; and we were transferred with bullion, mail and baggage to Panama without further incident of importance, but more than thankful for our deliverance from what at one time seemed certain death. For myself I never wanted any more ocean travel in mine, and was glad when I set foot in New York City.

Mr. Crane has resided since 1854 in Sycamore, Illinois and made the trip to Ventura in the hope of being able to revisit Anacapa Island and go over the ground of his thrilling experiences of 42 years ago. Owing to the absence of H. B. Webster with his boat, Mr. Crane was obliged to go to Santa Barbara to find means of transportation to the island. He is a hale old gentleman of 64 and retains a vivid recollection of the main features of the wreck which have been briefly outlined above. The only surviver of whom he has personal knowledge is Luther Johnson of Sterling, Illinois, who with him was one of the police patrol on the island.

—*Free Press*, January 17, 1896

THE WEBSTERS ON ANACAPA

By Karen Jones Dowty

Agriculture has played a major role in Ventura County history. Many colorful tales can be told of earlier ranching days, but one of the most unusual is that of Heaman Bayfield (H. Bay) Webster and his sheep ranch and fishing vacation camp on Anacapa Island.

The three small islets of Anacapa, barely a square mile in size, and much of that precipitous and inaccessible even for the sure-footed sheep, were not large enough for full-time ranching in the normal sense. Bay's father was postmaster[2] and he was assistant postmaster. But his first love was boating and this long-time Venturan had the time and income to try new ventures. When the Howland lease on Anacapa expired in 1907, Bay contracted with the Department of the Interior to run sheep on Anacapa and have the fishing concession for the same island. The lease cost him $75 per year.

That spring Bay and his wife Martha loaded household goods aboard his boat. With their two young sons, Morris and Harvey, they moved across the 14 miles of the Santa Barbara Channel to Anacapa Island. There they would spend their next 10 summers and two of the winters. This small island with its sheer cliffs, craggy precipices and volcanic tide pools would provide many an adventure for the Websters: an island ravaged by wind and water.

Where a few scraggly eucalyptus trees now grow on the shoreward side of middle Anacapa, the Websters made their home. Using whatever materials were convenient and readily available, the family built five huts which they named Camps Felicity, Simplicity, Capacity, Intensity and Necessity. Camp Capacity was entirely of flotsam. Camp Intensity was created from tents. Camp Necessity was probably the world's only sand-flushing outhouse; a trapdoor on the windward side allowed wind-deposited sand to pour into the 'toilet'. Camp Felicity with its concrete floor and windows facing the channel and Camp Simplicity which had a galvanized iron roof and furnishings brought from the mainland were more permanent.

Water was a problem for this island family. Except for the slow seep in what is now called Indian Water Cave on the shoreward side of West Anacapa, there was no fresh water on the island. The previous leasee had constructed cisterns to collect rain water; but rats (about the only land mammal on the island) had invaded them, leaving the water fit only for laundering. Bay built a storage tank by

Camp Felicity. On each trip to the mainland, he returned with five-gallon cans filled with fresh water.

The 800 sheep that Bay grazed on the island had an even more difficult time obtaining the water so necessary to their existence. During the wet winter and later the foggy months, they could lick moisture off the iceplant. This transport from Africa along with the native Dudleya (a plant that looks similar to the iceplant) was also the main diet of the sheep. In the autumnal dry season, the animals were forced to eat the prickly pear cacti for their water. The spines from the cacti stuck in the lips and gums of the unfortunate animals. A turn of the century rumor had it that sheep on Anacapa were in fog so much that they became walking sponges and could suck all the water they wanted from one another's coats. Amusing as it is, the rumor was never verified.

The spring shearing was a busy time for the Websters. As on the neighboring islands where sheep were grazed, three or four Indian shearers would be brought from the mainland. Sheep were rounded up on each islet for the shearers, no easy task on these craggy islets. The wool was baled and loaded on Bay's boat for shipment to the mainland. At this time some sheep were loaded on the vessel also. Although he was primarily interested in wool, Bay had to carefully control the herd size; the island ranch was too small for overgrazing to continue for long.

Martha cooked for the shearers, family and friends on a wood-burning stove. This especially kept her busy during the two weeks at shearing time. Adept at working with the old stove, she produced cream puffs so delicious that Harvey would recall them with pleasure over a half century later. During bad weather when they could not be out playing in their boat or in the tidepools, both boys were taught to bake bread in this same wood stove.

The climate of Anacapa, as that of the rest of coastal southern California, is so mild that the sheep needed no shelter. Being rather self-sufficient animals, they made ranching a rather easy occupation. When the Websters spent their winters ashore, they left a single watchman on the island to protect the flock. Most years there were no problems; but one winter he kept reporting that poachers were trying to steal sheep. On Bay's questioning, the watchman explained that many nights when the wind had died down enough for him to hear, the barks of the poachers' dogs were quite clear from the other side of the island. It took Bay only a second to realize his flock was

SEA-LIONS.

still safe and he had no problem for the noise was actually the raspy barks of sea lions which inhabit Anacapa's seaward side.

Bay Webster offered Ventura County residents one of the first package vacations known. For a small sum, a local farmer could take

his family to Anacapa on one of Bay's boats[3] and stay as long as they wanted. Facilities were available free in the 'Camp' community as were fishing, swimming, Indian artifact collecting and hiking. There was a smokehouse for the use of lucky fishermen, and many returned home with an ample supply of smoked fish for the following year. In return for their host's generosity, many brought the Websters gifts such as honey, produce and dried beans.

Morris and Harvey were in a boys' paradise, a wonderland of adventure. Morris was old enough to accompany his father and work as a deck hand on the fishing boat. Harvey, only three the first summer, stayed with his mother and hunted for the then plentiful arrowheads left from the Chumash Indians; with a life jacket and a line fastened securely to him, he did his own commercial fishing. One year's dried abalone and edible seaweed sales to Chinese markets made Harvey $80.

Days were busy with Bay and Morris making trips to the mainland or fishing while Martha took care of chores and Harvey worked at his enterprises. Evenings were spent reading and listening to the omnipresent crashing of waves on Anacapa's shores. Visits from Grandpa Webster and his war stories were always a treat, and many an evening was passed listening to them.

When Bay renewed his lease in 1912, the Bureau of Lighthouses had taken over the use of East Anacapa. He was not awarded another the next time so the family returned to shore. Bay subsequently occupied himself with other projects, one of which was the Webster Transportation Company that provided a bus line in Ventura.

[2] LeFevre Webster

[3] The CORLISS was 45 feet long with a regular schooner canvas but never sailed; it was appropriately named for its three cylinder Corliss engine. The 35 foot ANACAPA was a motor launch with a two cylinder gas engine. The 25 foot VIRGINIA was run by steam. *W. R. (Bob) Hill.*

FRENCHIE

By Karen Jones Dowty

Little is visible from the Ventura County coastline in the gray month of June. An occasional boat or gull may pass; but the Island of Anacapa, only 11 miles from the coast, cannot be seen at all. When the dry East Winds have cleared the air of moisture in the autumn, this seaward portion of Ventura County looks close enough to touch.

It was on this rugged island, only a square mile in size, that one of the county's more colorful residents lived as a hermit. Few people knew his real name. Simply called Frenchie, he came to settle in the shoreward cove which now bears his name. Not at all the proverbial recluse, Frenchie welcomed all visitors to his sheer rock-walled home and enjoyed frivolities, gallantries and lengthy discussions on almost any subject shared over a glass or more of 'vino'.

Named Raymond Ledreaux, he was born in Brittany over a hundred years ago. He studied for the priesthood but was never ordained. Disenchanted and bitter towards his church, Ledreaux chose the life of the sea, travelling on merchant vessels to China and America. In San Pedro, California he met his future wife Emma. He and the love of his life had a few short years together. Three children were born. The flu epidemic of 1918, which killed so many, took Emma also. Filled with sorrow over her death, Frenchie searched for a life elsewhere. He tried living in Mexico and lobster fishing there. His grief not subsiding, the Frenchman sought solace in solitude and drinking wine. He moved north to the Channel Islands and finally settled on Anacapa in 1928.

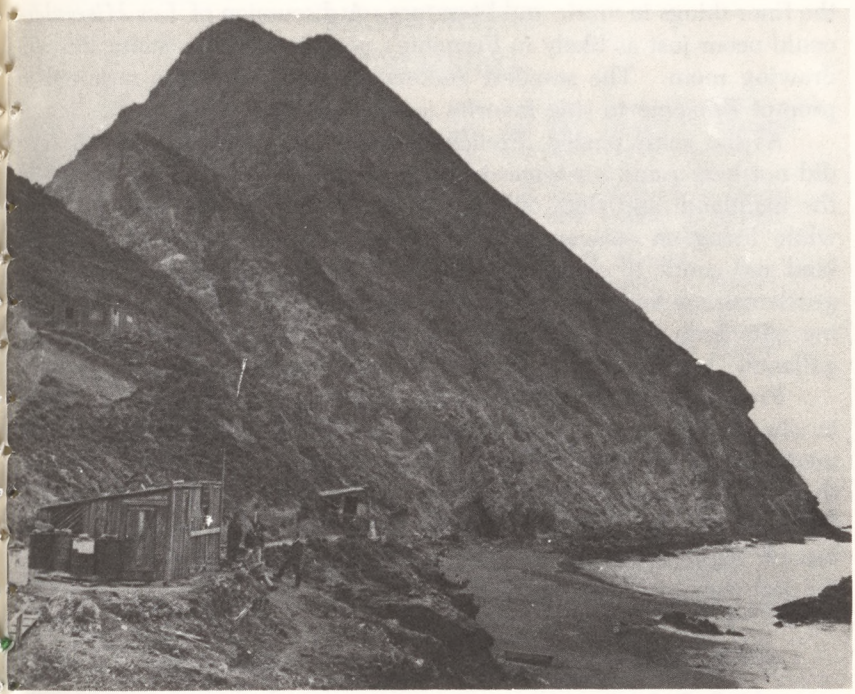
At the cove where tidepool visitors now land, he made his home. Frenchie's huts were among the sunflower trees called Coreopsis. One shanty was his sleeping quarters. Another housed his gear: odds and ends collected from the cove beach, and materials to repair his lobster traps and skiffs. A third shack, perched on the rugged cove hillside, was used for guests. Nearby sat drums for the rainwater Frenchie collected because Anacapa is an island without fresh water.

People from Port Hueneme to Santa Barbara came to know Frenchie. His cook hut was a favorite gathering place for local fishermen and divers. In his customary red flannels and a three-day stubble on his face, Frenchie would be stoking the fire from a wood pile that housed his colony of semi-wild cats. Beer and wine would

R. W. Love and Frenchie

be passed around. The sea stories would start and so would another day in Frenchie's Cove.

Frenchie lived, as the island Indians had for hundreds of years, off the bounty of the sea. With traps he made from wood and wire



Frenchie's Cove

and using empty wine bottles as floats, he caught lobster. The volcanic undersea terrain and the prolific kelp beds provided Frenchie with a never-ending supply of food. From one of his two heavy skiffs he fished the waters around the small islets of Anacapa. He rowed to other coves to collect abalone. Always he had spare seafood on hand; and on any weekend outing to Anacapa, Ventura County residents would take along a spare jug of wine to trade for some of Frenchie's catch.

Local coastal families enjoyed their vacations camping near Frenchie's huts. They would bring him canned goods, bread, cheese and wine and water when he needed it. With supplies provided by the fishermen's wives, Frenchie would prepare his personal variety of bouillabaissé and other succulent seafood dishes. When the visiting children tired of fishing and playing in the colorful tidepools, they were always glad to return to camp to hear a story or two by Frenchie. Although alone most of the time on an otherwise uninhabited island, Frenchie never lost his love of what he thought were

the finer things in music and literature. A discussion of *Les Misérables* could occur just as likely in Frenchie's cook hut as in a Santa Barbara drawing room. The smallest audience was all that was required to prompt Frenchie to sing favorite arias in his fine tenor.

As the years passed, Frenchie's sorrow over the loss of his wife did not lessen and his wine drinking increased. Rarely did he go to the mainland; and then only for short visits to friends he had made while living on Anacapa. All who knew him loved him. He was kind and gentle to children, and they delighted in visiting the French gentleman on Anacapa. Women responded to his gallantry by bringing gifts from ashore. As his wine consumption increased so did his gallantry, but never was an unkind word heard from him.

Frenchie was 68 in 1954. The National Park Service personnel in charge of Ancapa, part of the Channel Islands National Monument, decided to move him ashore. So ended Frenchie's stay on that craggy, sea-girdled segment of Ventura County. Longtime friends from Port Hueneme bade him good-by as he boarded the bus for Santa Barbara. His destination was not known and that was the last they ever saw of him.

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Janss Foundation. The company began its first real estate development activities in 1889. Operations were moved to the Conejo Valley in 1954 with offices in Thousand Oaks and Newbury Park.

Bank of A. Levy, 143 W. Ffith St., Oxnard. Founded in 1900 by the late Achille Levy, who came to Hueneme in 1875. Since its inception the Bank of A. Levy has been closely allied with the farm and ranch industries of Ventura County.

Noyes Plumbing Co., 1718 E. Main St., Ventura. Established by Bert Wigton and Joseph Noyes in 1924 in the old Hamilton Hotel Bldg., to serve Ventura County.

Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel, 757 East Main Street, Ventura. Successor to the business established by the Reardon family in 1911 and conducted continually in Ventura since that date.

Safeco Title Insurance Company. Successor to Security Title Co., has been insuring title to California properties since 1920 and headquartered in Ventura since 1959.

Santa Barbara Savings and Loan Association, organized September 21, 1887, was the first savings and loan association established in the city of Ventura. The Ventura branch office was opened in June 1944 with H. R. Holst as manager and Janet Walker as assistant, and later moved to its present location at 92 South Chestnut Street.

Santa Paula Savings and Loan Association. Organized in April 1890 as the Santa Paula Building and Loan Association with J.R. Haugh, president; Caspar Taylor, vice-president and H. H. Youngken, secretary. The organization has served the interests of home owners and builders, as well as those of the investor.

Vetco, Inc., 250 W. Stanley Ave., Ventura, started as Ventura Tool Co. in 1923 and has expanded from two men to over 2500 employees. Fritz Huntsinger is Chairman of the Board of Directors.

rman Rangere

OXNARD

Diamond Jubilee

1903 — 1978

Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly
Vol. XXIII, No. 4 Summer 1978

Oxnard Diamond Jubilee

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7,000 copies printed for the Oxnard Chamber of Commerce, Allstate Savings and Loan Association and the Ventura County Historical Society by Ventura Printing and Offset. Additional copies are available at $2.50 each.

The
Ventura County Historical Society
Quarterly

Vol. XXIII, No. 4 Summer 1978

Grant W. Heil, Editor

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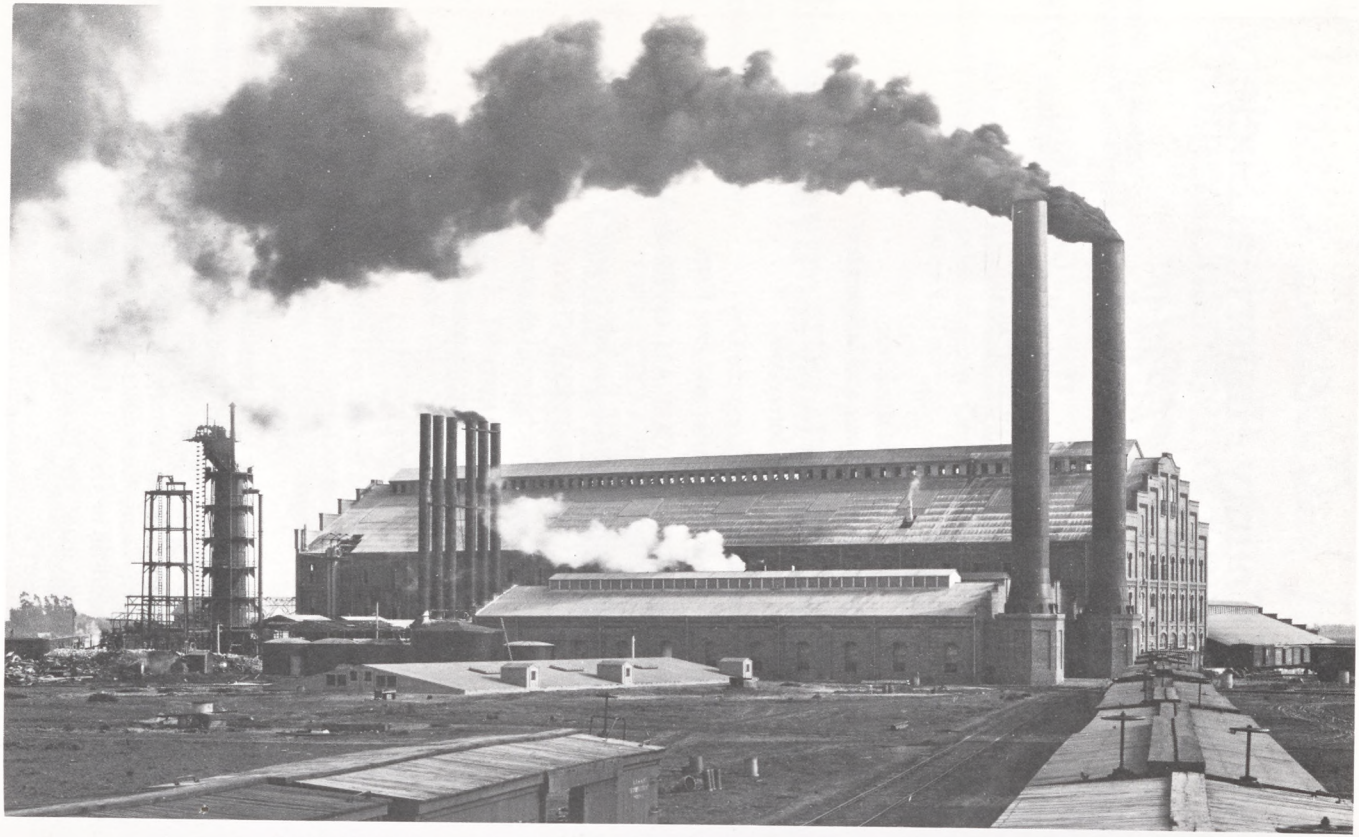
Notice

This special issue would not have been possible without the help of Madeline Miedema and Emilie Ritchen whose recollections and materials are invaluable. Duane Garber, Maud L. Higbee, Shirley Brown, the Ventura County Historical Museum and the Ventura County Library also lent photographs. The files of the newspapers are in the latter two places. Mrs. Lehmann has been a school teacher as well as a resident in Oxnard. David W. Hill did the collating, and Leroy Gibson redrew the map; the cover is a detail of a drawing by Norman Rangere.



Smoke billows over the American Beet Sugar Co.'s factory in the 'campaign'

OXNARD & VICINITY

Oxnard is located in the heart of the Santa Clara Valley, Ventura County, one of the richest farming sections of California, and is the center of a great beet and bean growing area. It is the terminus of the Oxnard branch of the Southern Pacific Railway which connects with the coast line at Montalvo, five miles distant. Oxnard is 2½ miles from the Pacific Ocean and ½ mile from the great beet sugar factory now in course of construction by the Oxnard brothers. The new town was laid out and established in March, 1898; and inside of six months it has become a bustling town of several hundred people with hotels, restaurants, general merchandising stores, etc. and has all the modern conveniences of older towns: having excellent railway facilities with daily passenger and freight trains, express office, telephone and telegraph stations; fine supply of artesian water and a water system supplying the whole town; graded streets which are kept constantly sprinkled, fine cement sidewalks on all the principal streets; excellent church and school privileges. Add to this the fact that Oxnard has a beet sugar factory nearing completion which will be second in size in the United States, having a capacity of 2000 tons of beets per day and employing 500 hands, and besides, the enormous amount to be paid out for wages will exceed a million dollars per year.

— *Free Press,* 1898

Smoke billows over the American Beet Sugar Co.'s factory in the 'campaign'

Load of lima beans at the corner of 5th St. and Saviers Rd. Max Folcke checks the tractor

SOUTH OF THE SANTA CLARA RIVER

Great Wealth-producing Section of County

YIELDING THE BULK OF THE THREE GREAT STAPLES SUGAR BEETS, LIMA BEANS AND BARLEY

Advent of the Oxnards

The advent of the railroad, the investment of two million dollars by the Oxnards, the building of one of the great sugar factories of the world and the wonderful growth of the town of Oxnard have brought the country south of the Santa Clara River into great prominence. It is all the more surprising that this enormous investment of capital has taken place in two years remarkable in the history of the State for light rainfall. Never before has the county become so famous by reason of the variety and quantity of its productions.

A Great Barley Section

Many years ago the farmers discovered that the valley was unexcelled for the raising of barley and hogs. Ventura County quickly came to the front as a grain county, but it was soon found that the land could be planted to something more profitable. Early this year the rains were deficient in quantity, and many farmers were afraid to plant beans. Many sowed barley. The result is 340,000 sacks have been threshed in the whole county; besides an enormous quantity of hay has been cut. This enormous yield of barley was grown without irrigation.

The Great Lima Bean Section

In early days the farmers did not know that Ventura was destined to become the great bean county of the world. Lima beans were planted with some misgivings. The discovery that they would do well led to a rapid growth of the new industry, added to the value of land and made landowners rich. Ventura has maintained its reputation as the great lima bean section of the world. It is without a competitor. For many years lima beans have continued to be the staple crop. In 1873 the shipments of beans of all kinds amounted to 4661 sacks. In 1875 lima beans were planted on an extensive scale. The acreage planted increased each year: In 1895 the crop amounted to 26,000 tons, 60 per cent of which was limas.

The industry had reached enormous proportions and the farmers realized that the bean crop, more than any other, distributed the most money in wages and required the greatest warehouse capacity. The value of the bean crop in 1895 was estimated at $1,100,000. At the same time, persons competent to judge, estimated one-half more land than had been planted was still available for bean

Load of lima beans at the corner of 5th St. and Saviers Rd. Max Folcke checks the tractor

Lehmann & Waterman receive the first carload of sugar manufactured in Oxnard

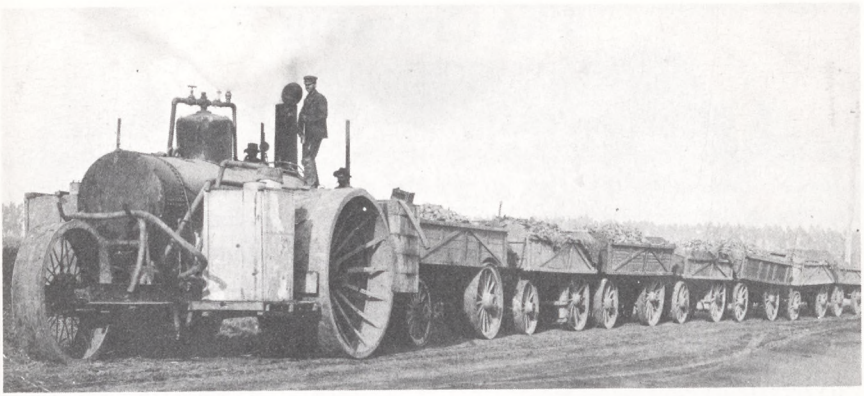
culture. While the yield in 1895 was between six and seven hundred thousand sacks, there was a possibility of the county producing nearly a million sacks.

After threshing, bean straw has value as fodder. It is fed to horses and cattle, and is considered good feed. It takes the place of barley straw.

Many varieties of beans are grown in the county, but limas constitute the great bulk of the crop. In the interior, a considerable distance from the coast, black-eyed beans are raised; but that is done because the land will not produce limas away from ocean fogs and sufficient moisture.

In the last few years the land-owners have discovered that while there was no danger of competition from other parts of southern California, yet the increased acreage yearly sown to lima beans was yielding such enormous crops that the markets of the United States were glutted. Prices became so low that there was no money in the business. About this time many landowners saw the necessity for diversified farming. If even one half the land could be planted to other things, the other half could be planted to limas, and the industry would continue to be very profitable.

That has happened this year. Farmers were afraid to plant beans owing to drouth. Barley was sown instead. A large acreage was planted also to sugar beets. The result is the bean crop is short. Lima beans are worth $4.60 per hundred pounds, and the price still has an advancing tendency. Some think the price will reach 5¢ per pound, and more. Many farmers have had a crop of 1,500 to 2,000 pounds to the acre.



Six wagons of beets being hauled into Oxnard

Sugar Beets Help the Lima Bean Growers

About two years ago when the bean market was badly demoralized by reason of overproduction, the sugar beet proposition came along. The Oxnards had been attracted hither by the wonderful fertility of the soil. It was quickly demonstrated that the lower Santa Clara Valley excelled in the production of sugar beets, both in quantity and quality.

This discovery quickly led to the building of the railroad, the planting of a large acreage to beets, and the construction of a sugar factory (except one, the largest in the world). As a beet sugar county Ventura already takes front rank. In barley, beans and sugar beets the country south of the Santa Clara River has achieved great distinction. Of these three great staples, it has raised the bulk of the crop.

— *Free Press,* South Santa Clara edition

LEHMANN & WATERMAN

Oxnard, Cal.

Keep the Most Approved Agricultural Implements in Stock.

Beet Tools a Specialty.

The Crossing

WAGON ROAD

Santa Clara River Bridge

According to a call signed by all the members, the Board of Supervisors held a special meeting on the 25th ult. for the purpose of looking after the construction of the proposed Santa Clara River bridge. On motion of Davis, seconded by Crane, John B. Leonard was appointed inspector of shop material of iron and steel for the bridge at the Judson Manufacturing Co.'s shops at Emoryville, California; said Leonard is to receive $1 for each ton of iron and steel so inspected, not to exceed a total of $100 as per written proposition of said Leonard, filed March 25.

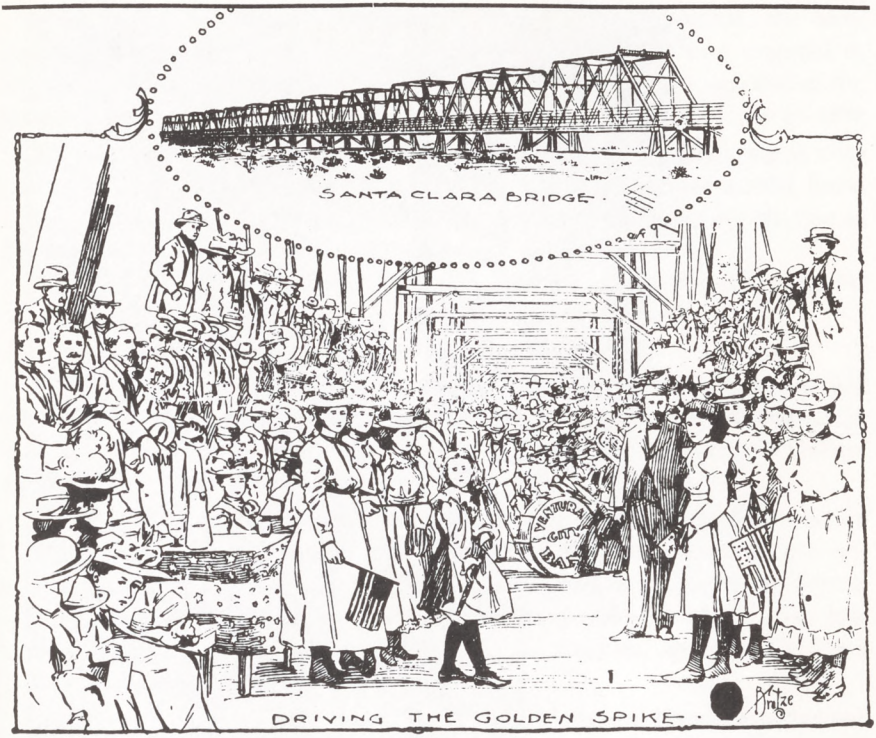
It was also decided that some changes of minor importance, in the construction of the bridge, be made. It is understood that the building of the new bridge will be "rushed", and that the delay has been caused by the illness of Contractor Burrell; but now the material is being prepared for quick work.

— *Free Press,* April 1, 1898

RAILROAD

What Is Being Done In and Around the Big Enterprise

Senator Orr representing the beet growers' committee, and Attorneys Toland and Andrews for the Oxnards met the Board of Supervisors and asked for a temporary permit for the railroad now being built to the factory, to cross the public highways until, under the Act of 1893, bids could be called for and the sale of franchise made. The District Attorney notified the board that they had no discretion in the matter but must advertise and sell the franchise if requested so to do, and that it was in their power to grant the permit. Senator Orr argued on behalf of the beet growers that to delay the construction very long would cause the county to miss receiving taxes on $1,000,000 worth of property for the ensuring year, for unless it was in place before March 1, it could not be taxed. He said the amount of such taxes would build 50 roads. Attorneys Toland and Andrews appeared for the Oxnards and not for the railroad company, and said that the Oxnards had guaranteed a right of way for the S.P. to build and that they were only endeavoring to carry out their agreement. Chief Engineer Hood says the bad condition in which the track will place the Conejo wagon road will only be temporary for later he expects to make it much better, and that he will place it in a very passable condition. This is the only road that is badly damaged; and on account of not being willing to make the curve on the bridge, the engineer has made the curve on the wagon road as it approached the river. Upon motion of Supervisor Davis seconded by Supervisor Crane, it was ordered that the special permit be granted, Mr. Smith also voting for it while Supervisors Flynn



and Hartman voted against it. Thus, the construction of the railroad and the work of erecting the factory will go steadily forward. — *Free Press,* Dec. 24, 1897

Local Correspondence

The Southern Pacific surveyors have made their final survey from Montalvo to the beet factory site. Willows in the river bed are being cleared from the proposed railway line, and before many days the pile drivers will be heard driving piles for the bridge across the river. — *Free Press,* Dec. 10, 1897

Preparations for building the railroad bridge over the Santa Clara River at Montalvo are in active operation; two huge pile drivers are up, and the poles will have to be driven to a depth of 38 or 40 feet. There is about 30 feet of sand in the bed of the river to go through before reaching the clay bed.

— *Independent,* Dec. 9, 1897

The railroad at Montalvo is booming. It is graded to the Santa Clara River bed and the track is laid to the river bank. Two pile drivers, one at the west end and the other at the east end, are at work. A temporary track will be laid across the river and the bridge will be completed before January 15, 1898. Over 100 men are at work. — *Independent,* Dec. 16, 1897

Oxnard depot on Aug. 17, 1904

The new railroad bridge across the river is nearing completion, the temporary line has been taken up and the construction train is now engaged in hauling sand from the river bed on to the embankment at the south end of the bridge. — *Free Press,* Jan. 28, 1898

The new railroad station has been completed as far as carpentering is concerned and has received a coat of paint. Whether it is to have a sand finish under the terms of the painters' contract or not, cuts no figure in this case as the wind did that in a very thorough and workmanlike manner.

— *Free Press,* April 15, 1898

New Tunnel Almost Completed

General Manager Kruttschuitt of the Southern Pacific Company has just returned to San Francisco from a long conference with President Harriman in the East. Concerning the improvements now going on and under contemplation, he gives the following to the *Chronicle*:

The 40,000 tons of 80-pound steel rails we ordered in England for western improvements have begun to arrive, which is remarkably prompt delivery. Three great cargoes have already been delivered and have reached California. Some of these heavy rails have been laid on the new double track to San Jose and some on the new short cut line to Los Angeles, through the Santa Susanna Tunnel.

The Santa Susanna Tunnel is to be 7,800 feet long and when completed will be the longest one on the Pacific Coast. There is only about 700 feet of this tunnel yet to drill, and that is only three or four months' work.

The Santa Susanna Tunnel is between Ventura and Los Angeles by way of the Simi Valley. As soon as it is done all the connecting road will be completed and ready for regular traffic. Then the Santa Susanna route will be our main line between San Francisco and Los Angeles, using the coast line as part of the system. This new cut off to Los Angeles diverges from the present line at Montalvo, a small town a few miles east of Ventura, and traveling the Simi Valley on a direct line for Los Angeles goes through the mountain and comes out again on the present line at Burbank, nine miles above Los Angeles. It cuts out all the crooked part of our road from Ventura to Saugus up through the Santa Paula Valley and the heavy grades beyond Saugus and through the San Fernando Tunnel, where we have to overcome a 2% grade. There is not a grade on the new line greater than 1%. The cutoff saves grades and curves and a distance of six miles. The coast route to Los Angeles was already a saving of eight or nine miles over the San Joaquin Valley route; so this new cutoff combined with the coast route will save 15 or 16 miles between San Francisco and Los Angeles. — *Free Press,* March 13, 1903

Oxnard depot on Aug. 17, 1904

The Wonder Town of the County

EXCELLENT WATER WORKS AND FIRE DEPARTMENT MORE THAN A MILE OF CEMENT SIDEWALK AND CURBING, AND TWO MILES OF PIPE LAID

Enterprising Citizens, Merchants, Fraternal Societies and Church Organizations

The founding of the town of Oxnard has been followed by a phenomenal growth, unequaled in the history of the county.

In the short space of two years the region south of the Santa Clara River, by reason of its productive soil and artesian water, has attracted millions of capital; and today the ambitious town of Oxnard and its mammoth sugar factory are monuments to the huge enterprise and prodigious energy of the Oxnard brothers. No name could be more appropriate.

Oxnard is located in the heart of the Santa Clara Valley, at an elevation above sea level of 45 feet, three miles from the ocean and about midway between Hueneme and El Rio. It is on the branch line of the Southern Pacific Railroad from Montalvo to Somis. The road will soon be continued through the Simi Valley to Chatsworth Park, making connection with the line to Los Angeles. In another year, also, the coast line from San Francisco to Santa Barbara should be finished. Oxnard will then be on the main line and most of the tourist and other passenger traffic will pass through the town.

When the factory was running the population was estimated at about 2,000. Next year, with sufficient rain, the beet crop should be double what it was this year. The factory will run to its full capacity, and the season will last four to five months. Numerous buildings will be erected by lot owners in time for the next opening of the factory. It will require a large number of laborers to put in the beet crop, and care for it till harvest time. In the meantime a large force of mechanics will be kept busy repairing and putting in new machinery.

In the vicinity of Oxnard are fields of alfalfa, excellent dairies and several hundred acres in walnuts, beside other trees and thousands of acres farmed to lima beans. While Oxnard is essentially a sugarbeet town, it has therefore other elements of prosperity. The citizens and businesss men are enterprising, public-spirited and ambitious to make the town worthy of its name. They have great faith in its future.

The town is beautifully laid out; all its streets are wide, and those in the business part of town have cement sidewalks and curbing which also extend into part of the residence portion. The town has also an entire block for a park. Twenty thousand dollars have been voted for the erection of a public school building to be the finest in the county. The people of Oxnard are proud of the

THE OXNARD

Newest, Most Complete

And Elegantly Furnished Hotel In Ventura County

Beautiful Sunny Rooms, Baths, Gas.

HOTEL
J. Abraham, : Prop.

And Modern Improvements.

fact that the wonder town of the county already occupies the front rank with its beautiful Hotel Oxnard, its pretty park, its wide streets, its cement sidewalks and curbing (a mile in extent) and its costly school building soon to be erected. Visitors to Oxnard from other parts of the county are amazed at what has taken place in less than two years.

A great deal has been published about the saloons, every one of which has been licensed by the county government at Ventura; but when the town is incorporated, its citizens will be in a better position to deal with that question.

The various lines of business are well represented. The telephone exchange has 40 subscribers. There are two lumber yards, a large warehouse, a planing mill, three drug stores, a bank, several general merchandise and grocery stores, three blacksmith shops, a racket store, dealers in gents furnishing goods and clothing besides numerous hotels, restaurants, lodging-houses, meat markets, furniture stores, harness shop, bicycle store, cigar store, etc. There is a public hall and lodge room for fraternal organizations. — *Free Press,* South Santa Clara edition

HOTEL OXNARD

Newest, most complete and elegantly finished hotel in Ventura County

This handsome structure was opened to the public on September 1, 1899. It faces the park in the best part of the town and is set back from the street, leaving room for a lawn, flowers and shrubbery. On two sides are covered piazzas, making delightful promenades for the guests.

The hotel is elegantly furnished throughout. On the main floor are beautiful rooms, spacious lobby and business office. The dining-room is 30x35 feet, and is finished and furnished with excellent taste. The kitchen is 22x22 feet.

Commercial travelers make their headquarters at the Hotel Oxnard, and a sample-room is furnished with four large tables. There are also clubroom, gentlemen's toilet, barber shop, baggageroom, etc.

Pressed brick is used in the fireplaces; the hotel has been wired for electric lights but at present is lighted by acetylene gas. Ascending the broad stairway the second floor is reached, where there are 20 sleeping apartments including five suites with lavatories, bath-rooms, etc. On the third floor are 14 apartments.

The interior of the building is finished in natural wood, oiled and varnished. The walls have a rough plaster finish. Wicker furniture is used in the ladies' parlor, one of the many elegantly furnished rooms in the hotel.

The guests have the advantage of the latest and best modern improvements, and everything is done to make the place attractive. There is the maple room furnished with bird's-eye maple, the blue room and another apartment reserved for a pink room.

One cannot help admiring the elegant sideboard, the old oak dressing cases, the rubber-tipped chairs (to prevent noise) the white enameled bedsteads and the beautiful carpets, the flower gardens and the potted plants.

The hotel under the excellent management of H. D. Armstrong has already become quite popular. It is strictly up to date and is the newest and most elegantly furnished hotel in Ventura county. The dining-room service, appointments and equipment are all that could be desired. The table is first-class, and H. D. Armstrong, the manager, takes pleasure in attending to the comfort of the guests.

— *Free Press*, South Santa Clara edition

OXNARD IMPLEMENT AND CARRIAGE WORKS

The largest establishment of the kind in the County

When J. F. Fulkerson decided to build and open up in Oxnard his friends knew that he would establish a business that would be a credit to the new town. The firm is composed of J. F. Fulkerson and W. H. Barnes. M. Barnes represents his father's interest in the business.

The firm has the reputation of doing scientific horse-shoeing and general blacksmithing in a thorough manner. Orders are promptly filled for all kinds of wagon work and farming implements. Fancy carriage work is solicited, and satisfaction in all cases guaranteed or money refunded. New rigs are manufactured to order, and all kinds of repairing promptly attended to.

Visitors are surprised to find so large an establishment. There are 5,200 square feet of floor space. The shop has three fires to accommodate a large

Oxnard Implement & Carriage Works, 4th and A Sts. Jas. Fulkerson is the rider

Oxnard Implement and Carriage Works

Scientific Horseshoeing, General Blacksmithing. | Wagon Work. Farm Implements.

Fancy Carriage Work Solicited

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED OR MONEY REFUNDED..... .....

J. F. FULKERSON & CO.

SOMIS, AND COR. FOURTH AND A STS,, OXNARD, CAL.

business. On the second floor is a large paint shop, where wagons, carriages, buggies, etc., are made to look like new ones. The shop contains a 10-horse power gasoline engine, also grindstone, drill, wood-lathe, iron-lathe, drill press, emery stand, band saw, etc.

For years Mr. Fulkerson was a well known landowner at Somis. He still owns a large blacksmith shop there. He also owns lots and buildings in Oxnard.

The firm is prepared to do a large business and give satisfaction to their many patrons, thus maintaining their excellent reputation. Machinery of all kinds is repaired in a workmanlike manner, and every branch of work guaranteed to give satisfaction. High-grade vehicles are made to order.

A large stock of hardwood lumber is kept on hand, also iron, steel bolts, tires, axles, springs, etc., and everything necessary to do a first-class business. The firm also handles a full line of farm implements, carriages, buggies and farm wagons. — *Free Press,* South Santa Clara edition

NEWBY'S PLANING MILL

Saviers Road, Oxnard

O. L. Newby has recently moved his planing mill to Oxnard. For many years his business was located at Hueneme, and his work gave satisfaction to his numerous patrons. The wonderful growth of the town of Oxnard created a big demand for mill work. Builders and contractors had to go to Newby's mill at Hueneme to get their orders filled. The result was he was kept very busy turning out work for the new town.

He did the work for the Rice Water Works, containing a 700-barrel tank with windmill. He also put up the tower and mill. He has the contract for mill work on Dr. Coates' new building. He has done work for the Oxnard Construction Company and the new bank building and other jobs.

His new mill is on Saviers road, and is 140 x 100 feet. He is agent for the best windmills. Mr. Newby is prepared to do general carpenter work, store fronts, tank work and general mill work. All orders will be promptly and properly attended to at reasonable prices. — *Free Press,* South Santa Clara edition

THEY SEEK A CITY

From Interviews

While the Germans and Irish filled the countryside, Alsatians migrated to the town. They were also in the vanguard of those moving from Hueneme to Oxnard. The older Lehmann brothers (Leon, Mathieu and Edmond) were in Lompoc first according to a banker named Weill. Later they were to settle in Springville. In 1893 they returned to Obernai, Alsace to visit their mother and youngest brother, Paul. He had been taking French lessons; the father had died earlier. When the older brothers found they were expected to serve in the German army, they would have left immediately; but the mother begged them to take Paul and her with them. Within 24 hours everything was packed and the sale of the property arranged for. On their way to California, they stopped in Chicago where they took in the World's Columbian Exposition. In Hueneme the Lehmanns were in partnership with M. L. Wolff, another Alsatian; but in Oxnard they were associated with Waterman until they became Lehmann Brothers.

Achille Levy was born in 1853 in Mommenheim, Alsace. By 1871 he was in San Francisco and late in 1874 in Hueneme. Mr. Levy acted as a landbroker and became known as the 'Bean King'; but by 1900 he was president of a bank in his own name. In 1902 a branch was established in Oxnard with a new building on the corner of 5th and B Streets.

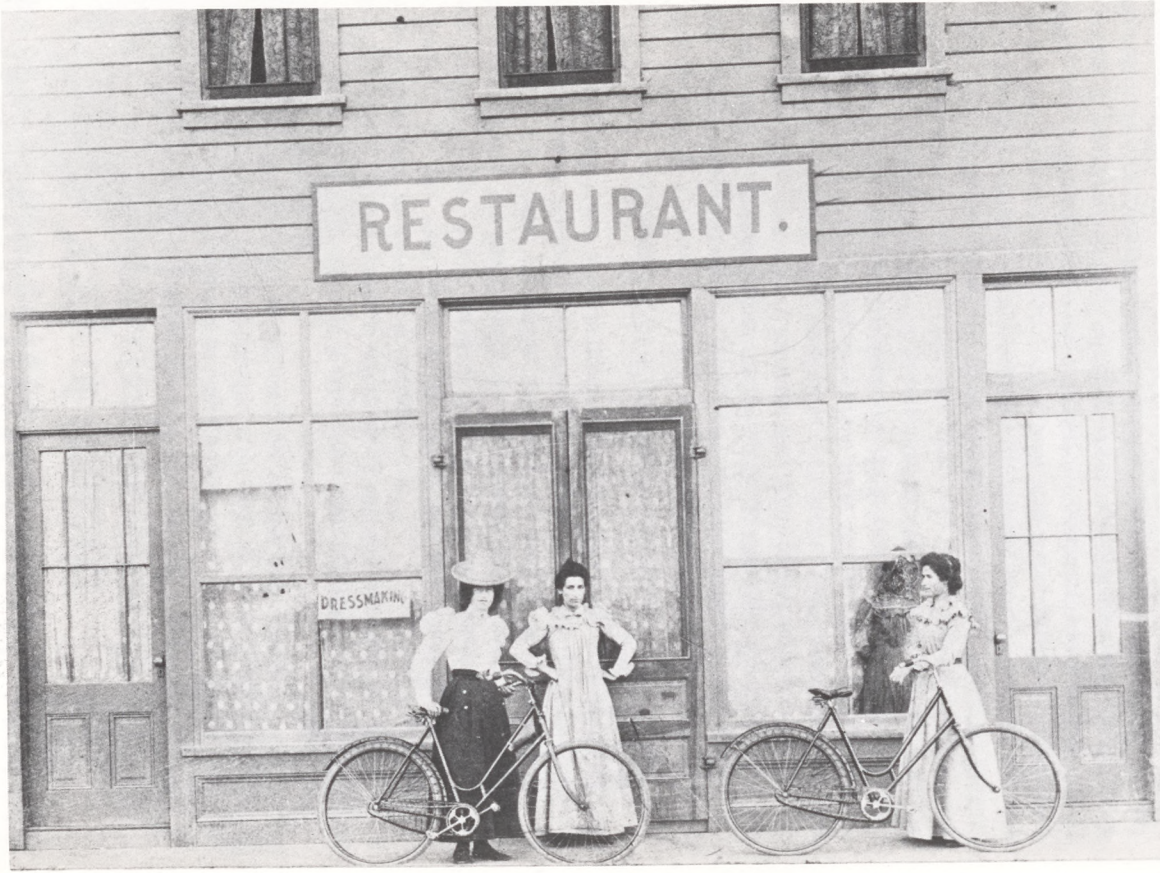
The Weills appear to be the first Alsatians to arrive. Aaron Weill came to Mississippi as a child of 14, and fought for the Confederacy. After the war he settled in Memphis, Tennessee where he married Sophie Gensberger, also a native of Alsace. Samuel Weill was born there in 1875, but came to Lompoc in 1892. There he was employed by Uncle Isadore who may have been the first of

Studio photograph of Paul Lehmann taken in Alsace

the family to come to California. In 1896 'Sam' Weill moved to Hueneme, and in 1898 to the new town of Oxnard. After working for others until 1900, he entered into business himself with a partner, C. J. Murphy. Murphy & Weill was well known for the quality of its merchandise.

One of the Wolff families came from Lorraine. After the death of their parents, four sisters (Emilie, Marie, Leonie and Antoinette) left Artzviler for Texas. While they spoke a provincial dialect, they had also learned French. Their ages ranged from 23 to 29. In 1898 the young women arrived in Oxnard where they opened a combination restaurant and dressmaking shop. Only the youngest, Antoinette, was to marry; Henry Ritchen, a baker from Hamburg, was her husband. In 1903 the Wolff Sisters became a bakery.

The Alsatians were adept at business and were to become known in financial affairs. Lehmann, Levy, Weill and Wolff are remembered names in Oxnard, Ventura County and southern California.



Wolff sisters in front of their shop at 519 C St. Antoinette, Emilie and Leonie outside. Marie at the window

City of Oxnard

INCORPORATION THE QUESTION

Again Agitated by the Citizens of Oxnard

For several weeks the citizens of Oxnard have been agitating the incorporation question again, and it will undoubtedly be brought up at the next Board of Trade meeting or a mass meeting of citizens; the former plan seems to be preferable to the larger number.

It is determined that this will be the third and successful attempt. There are the experiences of four years of effort along this line to profit by and there is nothing like defeat to teach a few lessons.

There is not the least doubt in the world but that Oxnard should be incorporated and the proper method to accomplish the desired end should be carefully studied. We individually do not believe that a mass meeting is the proper body to handle the details and plan the method of procedure. A half dozen conservative business men acting in conjunction with the Board of Trade would accomplish three times as much and more effectively. *Courier,* Jan. 31, 1903

Oxnard Will Vote On Incorporation

The people of Oxnard came out victorious Saturday before the Board of Supervisors in the battle for the submission of the question of incorporation to be voted upon by the people. Supervisors Gabbert, Daily and Warring upheld the petitioners while Supervisors Hartman and Smith voted against. At the conclusion of the vote Mrs. Hill, one of the protestants, shook hands with Messrs. Hartman and Smith while she shook her head at the other members of the board. The factory representatives and the Hill family were mad all through at the action of the board while the crowd of people in the room loudly applauded at the outcome.

The fight has been a long and bitter one of late. It was plain from the start that it was to be a battle between the people and the factory interests; but it is only recently that the factory has come fully into the open and declared that it did not want to be included within the town boundaries, not it said that it did not want to pay the town taxes which might be assessed against it but that it did not wish to become "the football of municipal politics" nor be ruled by a "petty town council".

The fight has grown more bitter each appearance before the supervisors. Last Saturday the board was about to take action, when the factory proposed the formation of a sanitary district. In this way it was said the people could get a sewer. The factory would help liberally to pay for this. Later incorporation could be

Aranetta Rice Hill

taken up, and the contracted lines used as once proposed and which excluded the factory. Though this was combatted by the people of Oxnard, the board gave the factory one more chance and put the matter over a week. It came up for hearing Saturday and, as it proved, for final hearing.

The argument was opened by Attorney Toland for the factory. He made a long talk and a strong talk for the consideration of the sanitary district plan and against including the factory. He said he had tried to get the Oxnard people in meeting together during the past week, but admitted they would not respond. A petition of protest had been passed around among them and this was the reason that his side had not been given opportunity to tell of the great good to spring from his proposition.

Mr. Barnes, loaded to the brim with Kansas eloquence, said he would only detain the board five minutes, then he said it might be 10 minutes, and when he got a-going it was 15 minutes or 20. He was so taken up with the interests of his client, Mrs. Hill, that he lost track of time and words flowed like a stream of grasshoppers through a sunflower patch. His client was perfectly willing that her 92 acre tract and her home place of 14 acres be included, but begged that her 280 acres of purely agricultural land be left out. He asked that the board ignore public clamor in dealing out justice to his client.

The Cottage Hotel Dining Room.

J. A. BRYANT.

Best of food. None but white help employed. Private dining rooms.

Cor. A and Sixth Street. Oxnard.

Pioneer Hall — Is at the service of the public for entertainments, lectures, dances, etc. Fine floor and furnished with Kimball piano. Suitable stage and scenery. Commodious gallery. Capacity 600.

Address for terms, **Pioneer Hall Co., Oxnard.**

Attorney Stewart then told how anxious the people were to meet Mr. Toland and talk over the sanitary proposition but that he came not on Monday, or yet on Tuesday and that they wearied of waiting and finally got up a petition of protest; after the signing of which they did not feel much like attending a meeting. Then Mr. Stewart read his petition, several of them, and begged the board to place its ear to the ground and listen.

W. E. Shepherd said that old straw was being threshed over and he saw little need of it. Speeches, he likened to breakfast foods: better fresh then warmed over. Then he proceeded to warm over one of the speeches, at least. He apologized to the board however. He rubbed the factory fur the right way by telling Mr. Oxnard, or the Messrs. Oxnard, what a nice thing it was to have a whole town named after them while some people have to be content to see their name only on a cigar box. Then Mr. Toland had some more to say about the beauties of a sanitary district, and its legality to which latter the district attorney agreed; and finally the board concluded it was ready to vote.

The motion was put by Mr. Daily and seconded by Mr. Warring, the question was put and the chairman put his shoulder to the wheel when he cast the deciding vote and settled the matter. The board fixed June 25th as the date for holding the election. — *Free Press*, May 22, 1903

BUSINESS LEADERS WERE SWEPT INTO OFFICE

Slates Picked

Based on predominant public sentiment incorporation now seemed assured. The mighty sugar company interests in the person of Col. J. A. Driffill, factory manager met with the city incorporation faction to endorse an election slate that would insure smooth sailing for the new civic ship. C . J. Elliot, longtime county clerk, was unanimously chosen for the city clerk position, "his office being by far the most exacting and important in forming a new city". There was some argument about city treasurer. This was quickly resolved when Leon Lehmann stated that if elected, he would divide city deposits equally between the Bank of A. Levy and the Bank of Oxnard. S. P. Rowe was suggested for city marshal; and although it was an appointed office, I. W. Stewart was unanimously chosen for the post of city attorney. The 'Citizen's Ticket' proposed as its candidates for trustees Jay Spence, R. B. Haydock, O. J. Coen, T. M. Hill and J. W. Parrish.

Socialist Opposition

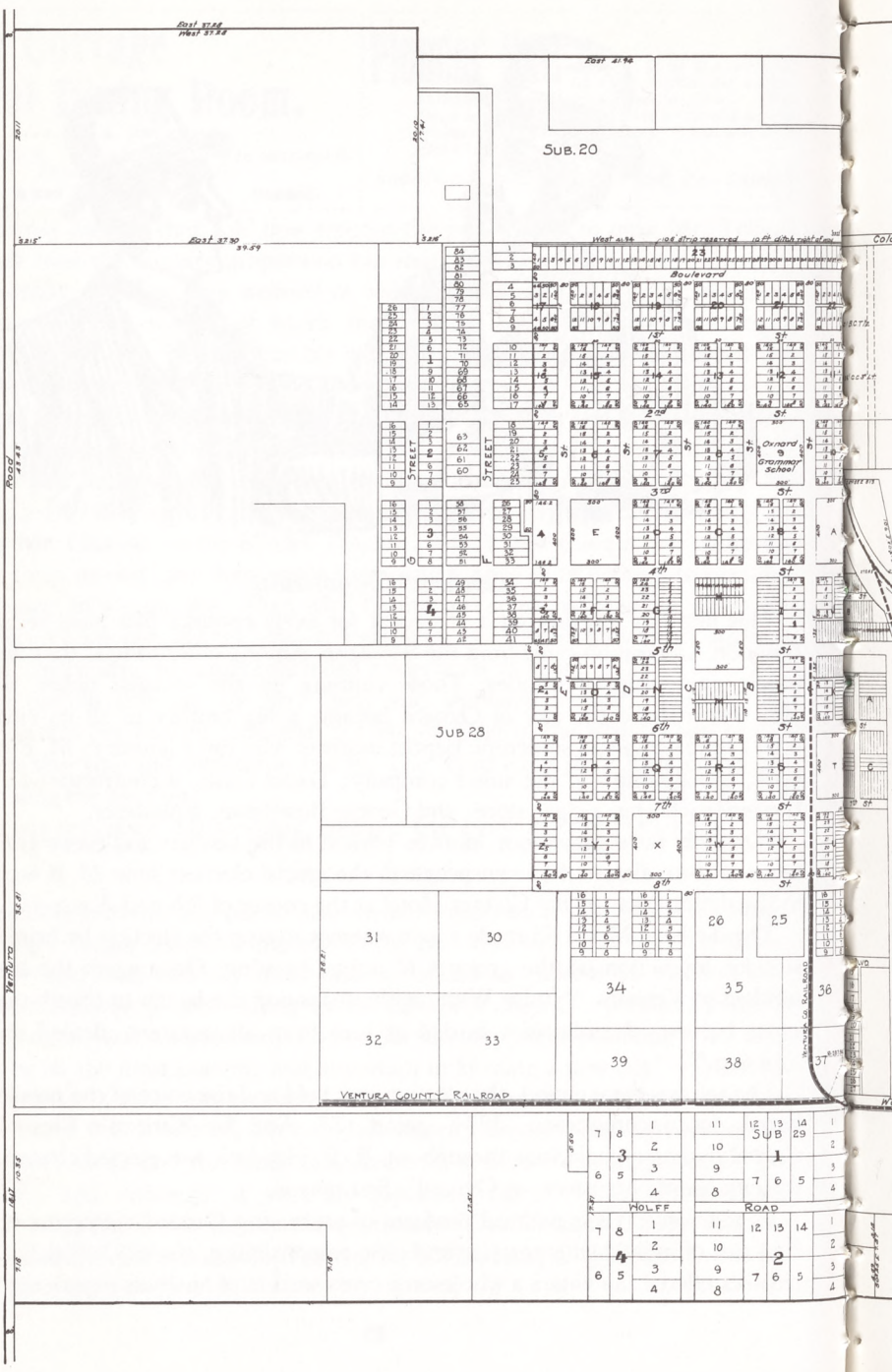
This first city election set a precedent for lively contests that have become a tradition. Opposition came from the Socialists. Among other things, they wanted public ownership of utilities. Those running on the socialist ticket, whose aim was to have the city of Oxnard become a big brother to all its citizens, were: Frank Inglis, a sometime Baptist minister who ran a laundry; M. Eschenbeck, a blacksmith at the sugar company; David Gastl, a contractor; C. Van Deventer who ran a cigar store; and George Boardman, a plasterer.

Handbills were passed out, notices printed in the *Courier* and every available fence in town alerted the townspeople to the special election June 25. It was held in the dining room of the Cottage Hotel at the corner of 4th and A streets.

The die-hard Mrs. Hill made a vain attempt to stop the election by bringing a suit for injunction on the grounds of unjust taxation. Once again the lawyers trekked to Ventura. "Judge West, without leaving the bench to thresh out the great harvest of authorities hurled at him from all quarters, denied the injunction."

The saloons were closed, the election was held and the voice of the people was heard: for, incorporation, 283; against, 13. And the 'Citizen's Ticket' was elected by heavy majorities throughout. R. B. Haydock was elected chairman of the city board of trustees, as Oxnard's first mayor.

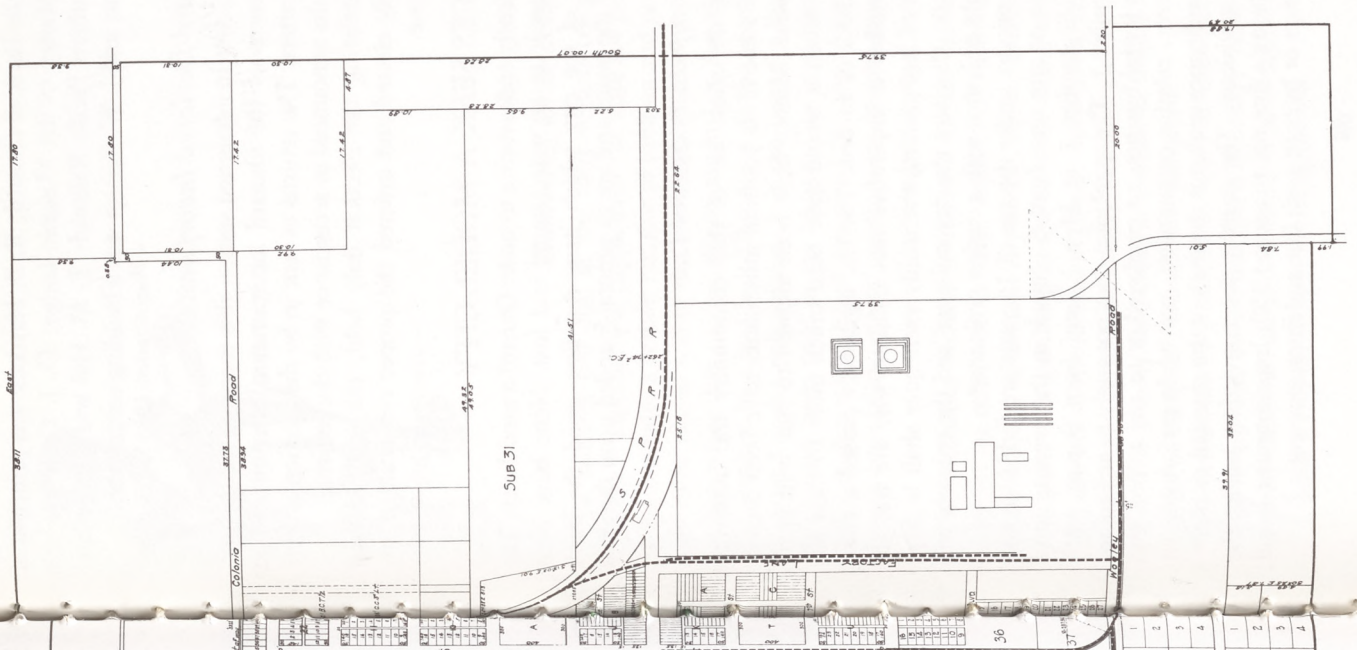
In addition to their political platform of promoting Oxnard's progress on the fleet feet of individual enterprise and civic responsibility, the city's first board of trustees offered the voters a wholesome cross section of business experience: Jay


SUB. 20
SUB 28
Boulevard
Oxnard Grammar School
STREET
STREET
Ventura
Road
VENTURA COUNTY RAILROAD
SUB 1
SUB 2
WOLFF
Road

CITY OF OXNARD

VENTURA COUNTY CALIFORNIA

Incorporated June 30th 1903.



Spence was the cashier of the Bank of Oxnard; R. B. Haydock was principal of the grammar school and Master of the Masonic Lodge; O. J. Coen was the esteemed agent for the Southern Pacific Railroad; T. M. Hill was a large land owner and real estate tycoon; and J. W. Parrish was a building contractor.

— *Press-Courier*, 1963 Special edition

Oxnard Declared Incorporated

The Board of Supervisors met in adjourned session this morning for the purpose of canvassing the returns of the Oxnard incorporation election and to dispose of other business matters. The returns as sent in by the election officers were canvassed and the results announced in accordance with the returns.

An order was issued declaring the election duly held, the incorporation carried and the officers duly elected and ordered the proper certificate transmitted to the Secretary of State.

— *Free Press*, July 3, 1903

TRUSTEES SEEK A MODEL CITY

The city trustees are evidently endeavoring to make Oxnard a model city. The ordinances so far passed appear to be wise, sound and just. None have been spread upon record books of the city which have not first stood the frank criticism of each member of the board and are in general founded upon the tried ordinances of older towns.

Compulsory School Law

At various times during the short life of this community the untoward freedom and perverseness of some of its youthful inhabitants have been the occasion for newspaper comment. Minors have been allowed to run wild at all hours of the day and night when it would have been much more to their advantage to have been in school or in bed. The last legislature passed a compulsory school law which makes it imperative that children who are not absolutely needed in the work of replenishing the family exchequer shall be kept in school. That, in a measure, alleviates the day nuisance and the trustees will at next meeting allay the night nuisance with a curfew ordinance.

The law provides that all minors under the age of 16 years are forbidden any of the public streets or alleys at any time from 8 o'clock in the evening until sunrise the next day from September 1 to May 1, and from 9 p.m. until sunrise from May 1 to September 1. The regulation does not apply to any minor who may be pursuing some lawful business or employed or to any minor who may be accompanied by parent, relative or guardian, nor while performing an errand for said parties. The ordinance makes it the duty of the marshal or nightwatchman to enforce its provisions. The penalty for conviction under the provisions of the ordinance being a fine not to exceed $50, imprisonment in jail for a term not to exceed 25 days or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Gambling Ordinance

The trustees will also at the next session consider a gambling ordinance, which it is expected will supplement the state law on the same subject. The state law enumerates a certain number of banking and percentage games which it forbids to be played within the confines of California. The local ordinance is based on one which has proved efficacious in Los Angeles County, a copy of which was obtained by City Clerk Elliot through the prompt courtesy of Chief Elton of the Los Angeles police force. It is the last of a long line of similar ordinances which have been tried in the 'Angel City' and found inadequate. Its very simplicity is disarming, but it has stood the test of the higher courts and through its instrumentality convictions are being had frequently in Los Angeles.

Particulars it prohibits

The ordinance declares it unlawful for any person either as principle agent, employee or otherwise to keep, conduct or maintain, use or permit to be used within this city of Oxnard any house, room, apartment or place, used in whole or in part, as a gambling house or place where any game not forbidden in the state law above mentioned is played, conducted, dealt or carried on with cards, dice or other devices for money, checks, credit, chips or other representative value. The penalty for violation is a fine of from $5 to $300, imprisonment for 90 days or both such fine and imprisonment.

The ordinance is intended to make it unlawful to play poker, whether in public or private, for anything of a monetary value though it be so insignificant as penny ante with a ten cent limit. Whist may no longer be played for two bits or a dollar a corner without breaking the law. — *Courier,* Sept. 18, 1903

OXNARD WA
ING OUT

Oxnard in 1903 was many things:

It was a brand new town anxious to fill its conventional civic knickers in many respects, yet somehow still unwilling to give up its baggy breeches of boisterous boyhood. A scant five years old when it was incorporated, transformed from an empty plain to a throbbing community of 2,200 stalwarts souls by the magical wand of the sugar beet industry, Oxnard was a town virtually without tradition, yet ready, willing and able to establish a few of its own.

Oxnard in 1903 was busy:

The town's own built-in sugar daddy, the American Beet Sugar Company, employed 700 workers to manufacture 5,000 100-pound sacks a day, which took 2,000 tons of beets every 24 hours. To supply this production need, the country's farmers planted 19,000 acres to beets which they rotated with beans, themselves a million-dollar crop. Farmers and sugar workers were accommodated in spending their money by bustling merchants. From dry goods to dairies, butchers to blacksmiths and builders to bankers, everyone contributed to the expanding economy.

Oxnard in 1903 was abuilding:

The Colonia Improvement Company, headed by that squire of Oxnard, Major J. A. Driffill, not only laid out the town, made "wide streets and sidewalks the rule not the exception", put in a water system and built a first-class hotel, but offered lots and houses at impressively reasonable figures for anyone wishing to settle in "Oxnard, Southern California".

To wit, a handsome lot "within sight and sound of the Pacific Ocean" could be had for $250, a handsome family home for $1,500 to $1,800 and a magnificent gingerbread mansion for $3,000. Commercially speaking, local contractor Tom Carroll constructed a quarter-block big two-story brick office building on B street for Dr. W. R. Livingston. The total cost of the contract, including all materials, masonry, ironwork, woodwork, plumbing, marble fireplaces and a dumb waiter to the second floor was $5,166.

WAS BUST-
ALL OVER

Oxnard in 1903 was alight:

Here again the mighty hand of the American Beet Sugar Company gave its blessing to the community in the form of electricity for the downtown business section and contingent residences although the majority of homes were still kerosene-lit. Optimistic plans to boost the power output of the sugar company's generating plant never materialized. It was not until the Oxnard Light and Water Company took over the utility chores in 1905 that the town became 100% electrified.

Oxnard in 1903 was rambunctious:

Business was brisk in the town's 17 saloons, most of which had a bevy of dancing girls and/or gambling for the entertainment of their customers on a pretty much round-the-clock operation. It was not until after the city's incorporation that a sane closing hour for such emporiums became established amidst considerable grumbling from the sporting element. Amongst the other activities in famed China Alley, this local Hell's Half Acre was the center of operations for numerous Chinese lotteries which were perfectly legal at the time, if not too profitable for the players.

Oxnard in 1903 was social:

While the sporting element confined its activities to the east end, the solid citizens in the west end of town were attending lecture courses, hearing W. C. T. U. speakers, funning it at the skating rink in the opera house, playing whist, putting on plays and getting together for church socials. The opera house offered residents tasty theatrical fare, such as Joseph de Grasse playing Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice;* and the good gentry of the community turned out *en masse* to support the theater and concerts. Dances at the fraternal halls or schools were the thing, the young people making the arrangements on a moment's notice with the girls bringing shoe box lunches for themselves and their beaux and the music being supplied by Fred Thatcher's four-piece orchestra or another local combo.

IN THE YE
-CAME A

Oxnard in 1903 was thrifty:

These were the days that today's household dreams are made of. The butcher was happy to sell you prime cuts of beef sirloin for 25 cents a pound, and gave you the beast's neck and liver for naught if you wanted them. Eggs were a nickel a dozen as was a loaf of bread; and the same coin bought a bunch of fresh vegetables delivered to your door by a Chinese gardener. Gentlemen's tailor-made suits varied from 15 to 20 dollars, the ready-to-wear variety starting at three dollars and a half including alterations. Ladies wear sold at comparable prices; shirtwaist, gloves, petticoats, etc. all marked less than a dollar; and the most elegant ladies' suits with bustle and ruffles galore sold for about 18 dollars. Excellent footwear could be had for three dollars a pair, male or female. If a fellow and his girl were to dine out they could have a great steak dinner for 35¢; or if it were an especial occasion, go to the Willis Sisters' restaurant where they would be served a scrumptious banquet from oysters to ice cream with a choice of delightful entrees and a half dozen fresh vegetables. Total cost: one dollar and a half for the couple, tipping discouraged.

Oxnard in 1903 was horsey:

Although horseless carriages caused considerable conversation around town, the good folk at Oxnard were loathe to trade their beloved tried and true hayburners for the upstart mechanical monsters, still very much in the novelty category. Local land baron Jack Hill was especially proud of his two race horses, Bogam and Gambo, and John McCoy cherished his chestnut stallion, which could run the mile in two minutes, 18 seconds. His horse and buggy was every man's mobile castle, much more than a mere mode of transportation. Farmers, of course, numbered their equine laborers in the dozens; but they, too, had their favorite horse to hitch to the surrey for a Sunday afternoon's picnic.

Oxnard in 1903 was fun-loving:

When the day's work was done, the local sports were wont to meet at the bowling alley on C Street for a few frames, drop by the livery stable to watch

EAR IT BE
ACITY: 1903

Oxnard's own pugilistic pride, Sam McVey, work out with an unfortunate sparring partner or perhaps watch, or participate in, a baseball game with Hueneme, Pleasant Valley or even Ventura. Russell Carroll tells of getting up early in the summer, driving down to the Hueneme wharf in a buggy, catching a mess of jack smelt, having same for breakfast and returning in time to open the bank at 8 o'clock. When they were not in school dunking their neighbor's pigtails in the ink well, a favorite pastime of the younger male generation was to hitch their home-made wooden sleds behind a horse and buggy and glide along on the straw that was put on the muddy unpaved streets after a rain.

Oxnard in 1903 was God-fearing:

Five religious denominations (Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist) had established meeting places by the time the city was incorporated, and all claimed healthy congregations. Members and their families made their church the center of their social life. Both German and Irish settlers in the area were Roman Catholic, and attended the same church. Differentiation was accomplished by the Irish families sitting on the epistle side of the church and the German on the gospel side. The Gospel before the sermon was read first in German, then in English.

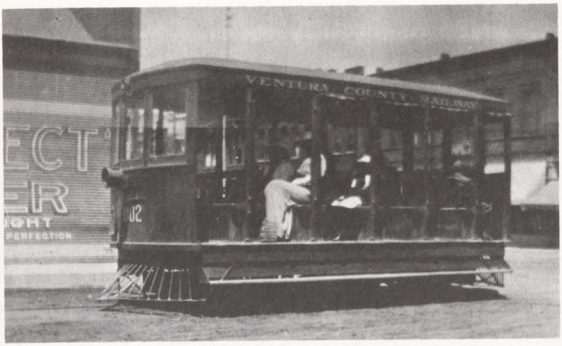
Oxnard in 1903 was progressive:

Business boomed, merchants became fat and sassy and thrifty farmers went quietly about the business of raising their crops, children and incomes; and everyone in the community contributed in his own way to Oxnard's steady growth. The local bankers handled the financial affairs of the thriving town with such acumen that it has been said that A. Levy made more millionaires in the county than any other single man, with the possible exception of Senator Thomas R. Bard. Typical of the aggressive confidence of those Oxnard pioneers was that displayed by Harry Witman who would guarantee to sink a producing artesian well on any given piece of land in the area for $100. If the wells did not come in, you did not pay.

— *Press Courier*, 1963 Special edition

First Presbyterian Church, corner of 6th and D Sts. Building was moved from Saticoy

Meyer's Saloon, 137 5th St. Bartender Richard McKinney, a customer and owner Henry Meyer



Mrs. Lathrop boards the street car at the corner of 5th and A Sts.

HANDSOME LITTLE GASOLINE PASSENGER CAR

Ordered For B. & V. Railroad Street Service

Superintendent T. B. Blackburn of the B. & V. Railroad informs us that he has ordered the handsome little gasoline passenger and mail car that is shown on this page and the car will be running between Oxnard and Hueneme somewhere near May first of this year.

The car has a seating of 20 people or more, there being five seats on each of which four grown people may be seated comfortably. In addition to this it has open sides and a railing that will make it possible for a dozen or 15 more to stand. The car will make a total capacity of 50 people possible at one time as the smaller gasoline car, that is now in the possession of the company, is capable of carrying at least a dozen people at a pinch.

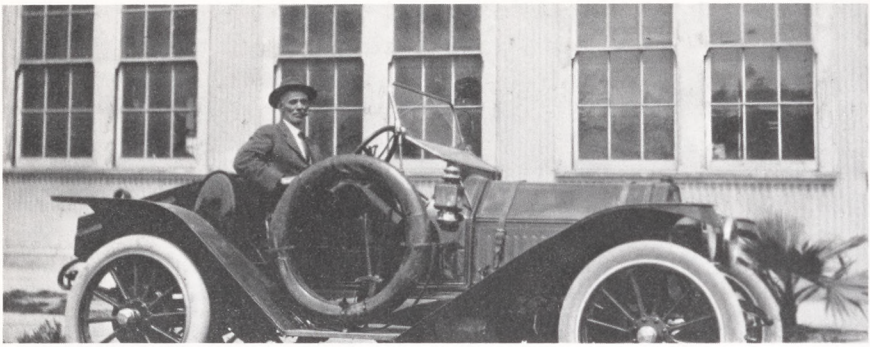
When the new car is installed, it will run at regular intervals from Oxnard to Hueneme and will carry passengers from the center of town to the beach. It will make the run in short order, and on Sundays and holidays will run at short intervals. It will also run at intervals for the dances that will be given in Ormond Hall during the summer evenings.

The car will be wired and will carry electric lights. It will have a substantial wood top, canvas covered, and vestibule ends with drop windows. There will be roller curtains at each seat reaching to the floor. It will maintain a speed of 20 miles an hour.

There is a 25-horsepower Sheffield four-cylinder gasoline engine for power, which is placed well up above the track, practically in the car itself. The car can be operated from either end, and the seats are reversible. — *Courier,* April 24, 1911

DUNN MANUFACTURING CO. ENTERS LOCAL INDUSTRIAL FIELD

The Oxnard Garage and Machine Co. has transferred its plant and property to the Dunn Manufacturing Company, a newly organized corporation which has sprung into existence to promote an infant industry, fathered by W. L. Dunn,



Billy Dunn sits in a Marmon in front of his manufacturing plant, corner of 5th and C Sts.

the inventor of the Dunn pipe wrench and the Dunn under-reamer, oil well tools of acknowledged merit in every oil center where tested.

The articles of incorporation were filed with the County Clerk, recently, and call for a capitalization of $150,000, divided into 15,000 shares of the par value of $10 each.

The first directorate is composed of J. A. Driffill, H. R. Staples, H. E. Thomas (Oxnard) W. L. Dunn (Piru) G. G. Robbins (Santa Barbara) and the business will be under the direct supervision of the following officers: J . A. Driffill, president; H. R. Staples, secretary; W. L. Dunn, general manager; G. G. Robbins, general sales manager.

Strictly speaking, the change of ownership does not affect the line of work heretofore constituting the business of the Oxnard Garage and Machine Co., as evidenced by an announcement just received at this office, which says, "It is the intention of the Dunn Manufacturing Co. to continue to operate a general machine shop and also the automobile garage and automobile repair shop, with Max G. Folcke as foreman of the automobile department."

The Dunn patents cover the United States, and will be extended over Mexico, Russia, and Japan. The merit of the tools now to be manufactured here on a large scale, will pave the way to a ready demand; and if present plans are carried out, together with present business prospects, the company will have employment for from 50 to 100 skilled mechanics. To the already superior equipment of the machine shop, special machinery will be added; and all parts of the oil well tools will be manufactured and assembled here.

With the inventor at the head in directing operations, the success of the industry may be reasonably expected. Max Folcke, as head surgeon of the auto hospital, is competent to reduce all fractures and breaks by the most approved methods.

— *Courier,* July 16, 1911

I REMEMBER THOSE THINGS

By Coletha Nicholson Lehmann

My parents arrived in Oxnard in 1901 from Santa Barbara where they had been living for 18 months. My father was a railroad man when they were married in Tulare in 1891. He was an engineer on the Southern Pacific Railroad which had been hauling much of the material that came in to construct the sugar factory in Oxnard. He became acquainted with Major Driffill who had interests in the factory. A newspaper clipping from the *Courier* indicates Milton Nicholson was the first Southern Pacific Railroad employee to live in Oxnard; but when they arrived there was no place for them to live because there was not anything to rent. So they stayed in a hotel called the La Colonia which was located on A Street off 5th.

It was situated on a place where there was an alley in the back of the businesses which faced 5th Street, and many of those were saloons. The girls who were there used to come down the back steps and my mother watched them. She was always shocked about that but I suppose she got over it. These prostitutes never went on the main streets, they kept in the alleys or out of sight. They did not mingle with other people and kept pretty much to themselves. Winemans was one of the stores, and I worked there for $3.00 a day when I was going to college. The manager asked us to remain after hours; then he opened the back doors and the prostitutes came in from the alley. I had charge of the lingerie department; the girls bought all the nice things, and my book for the day was a big one.

In 1905 my father became the stationary engineer for the Ventura County Light and Power Company which had a steamplant to generate power for electricity. It was located on east 5th across the street from the Southern Pacific Railroad station. After he had been working there for awhile, he came to be on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They found it would be necessary for him to live on the premises, but securing a house was next to impossible. So they moved in an old building which had formerly been a store in Saticoy, and they renovated it; and it was made into a residence. My mother was not very happy in this place, but there was no choice in the matter.

The power company not only produced the electricity, but my father was also in charge of the gas plant. The huge round tank rose and fell. Father would look

The Colonia Co-Operative Co. have recently opened a fine new stock of general merchandise and specialties to suit the farmers and their daily sales are already very gratifying. The company is prepared to take farm produce in trade at fair prices. Poultry and eggs are in urgent demand at present. tf

The Colonia House

Good Accommodations
Terms Reasonable

BELL, PROPRIETOR. OXNARD

out and say, "Well, I have to go over now and take care of that." He would start the motor and compressors to build up the gas and force it through. He was also in charge of the fire whistle. Because Oxnard wanted one operated by steam, it had to be at the only steam generating plant. Whenever there was a fire, he would have to get up to summon the volunteer firemen; only then would they gather to put it out.

I was my father's helper from the early age of three or four. There were no safety screens to protect a little toddler, but I was disciplined to obey. I was allowed to be where all the wheels were moving around, and there was always a big fire to generate the steam. Since the boilers burned oil, trucks would come to fill up the storage tank. There was a softener to keep the parts from being encrusted; but the water was so hard that every so often they had to bring in laborers with long poles to ram through the openings to knock out the encrustation. I remember two artesian wells behind our house. In the summertime I would sit on top of the well and bathe my feet in the cool water. Later I learned the well belonged to the sugar factory and people drank the water.

After we had seen that everything was in order at the power house, my father and I walked up a block and a half to the saloon every evening. He would set me on the bar, and somebody would say, "Well, stand her up." I had a great time walking up and down. I think the candy bars I got were to keep me from talking when we reached home.

Now our neighborhood was a rather exciting place in which to live. It was on the eastern outskirts of town across from the Southern Pacific Railroad depot. There was a lot of activity in those years with the trains coming and going. The sugar factory opened in August and ran into November with its beet trains; there was switching back and forth, clanging of bells and blowing of whistles. Meeting the passenger trains in the afternoon was customary in a town. Oxnard did not provide many things to occupy the people for enjoyment in those days; and on Sunday the great strolling time was when the five o'clock train came in. They would come to see the people who arrived, and reporters from newspapers would be there to ask questions.

Since the streets were unpaved at that time, as a child of four I can remember the watering truck coming down the street drawn by horses with a big spray of water, going around the depot and making its way on the other side. We had some stores in Oxnard, but there were vendors too. The Chinese had a wagon with their fresh vegetables and they would stop in front of our place for Mother to go out and get her produce. The fish man with his most unmelodious type of horn would also come. The ranchers brought their eggs and butter into the stores and received credit for them which they took out in merchandise. I remember my mother always insisted on the butter the Connollys brought.

Ventura County Light & Power Co. boiler room. Engineer Milton Nicholson and helper Coletha Nicholson

When I started school, kindergarten was on 2nd Street behind the main school building. It had been brought in from the Colonia and was called the San Pedro School. Magnolia Avenue was the city limits at that time; when the kindergarten teacher said we were going out to the country to paint, we went there and sat under a row of eucalyptus trees. There must have been snow on Topatopa because my picture showed it on the mountains. John Nichols was the principal when I went to kindergarten. The first Mexican laborers came to Oxnard in 1910; they were transients who worked in the fields, thinning and topping the beets. A little colony of them lived east of town in whitewashed adobe houses. During that time the teachers in the first grade had to devote most of their time to Mexican children who could not speak English. Of course that left the rest of us to amuse ourselves but there were not enough activities to keep us out of mischief. We were punished severely; when my mother decided I could not stand it any longer, I was sent to the parochial school, S. Joseph's Institute. Here I received the attention pupils needed, and Father Laubacher found me responsive.

My first grade teacher had not been affectionate, but Sister Laboria was very loving. I went back to public school for the fourth grade; but I told Dick Haydock I knew all the work because I had learned it in the third grade at S. Joseph's Institute. This did not go over very well with this principal, and he did not promote me. My first teacher was Bernice Keron, and my fifth grade teacher was Onarinda Haskell who became Mrs. Jones. Later I went to the old high school on C Street; and when it moved to west 5th Street, I was in the first class that had completed one year.

The big thing for four months was the sugar beet factory. We always had an influx of people. I think that the factory emmployed 800 people during the season it was running. Rooming houses did a big business and we had many for these people. It was busy 24 hours in shifts. The factory whistle would go off at six o'clock in the morning and again in the evening. The building was lit up at night; and looking over there, you could see this array of lights. The farewell whistle used up the steam; and as it ran out, there was a dying sound. Everyone felt sad that the factory was closed. Men left town, the place was dark and you waited for the next season.

There were many saloons in Oxnard; one on every corner between Saviers Road and the park, and around on the off streets, Lagomarsino's on B Street off 5th was considered the nicest. Dolly Gray's Saloon was on the corner of 5th and David Cohn had one nearby. There was a pool hall on 5th between A and B Streets, and that was where all the young men held out. My brother used to play there. It was not a rowdy place located behind a bar, it was a good clean room open in front. One time I walked in, just to be daring.

Santa Clara Roman Catholic Church and the rectory are across E St. from S. Joseph's Institute and the convent.
The parish moved from El Rio, and the parochial school was built in 1901.
Santa Clara Church was built in 1904, and consecrated the following year

In the early days of Oxnard there was excitement connected with farms. The threshing crews came through. On Saturday night they came into town with their guns and shot up the place. I was told these men would go into a saloon and shoot all the bottles off the shelves. Then they were off on their horses; and by the time they got to our place, they would say their farewells. We were about the last place on the way out. I always knew when it was Saturday night because of all the shooting on the eastern edge of town. A couple of times on my way to school I passed bodies that had been stuffed between telephone poles and the fence. I knew Oxnard did have its wild days, but I was supposed to go on very calmly.

A place people were supposed to stay away from was China Alley. My first experience with it was when I was about five years old. We had a police chief then whose name was Kelly, who rode in a horse and buggy. He would drive me to China Alley on the 4th of July, where he could get all the fireworks I wanted. He would take me at other times too; and the Chinese would load me up with litchi nuts and cocoanut candy. I always thought it was a great place to be, but later I found out it was very different. Lottery was going on there and many of the men in Oxnard paid nightly visits to mark their tickets.

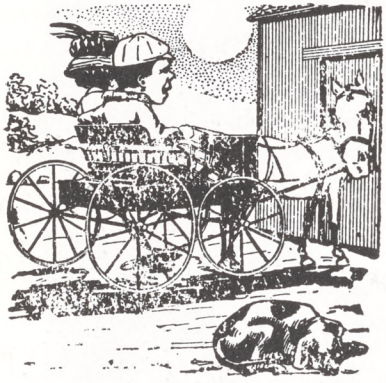
I had an older brother who thought I should know all the things that went on! He showed me the gambling places. The Chinese had a unique system of communication. Three of them on every block would sit outside their small stores on boxes. As you approached 5th Street the first man, if he knew you, would give the okay when it was all right. If they did not know you, they were prepared. They had false fronts to their stores; as you walked along it looked as though there were nice little places to buy tea, a teapot and teacups; but they were all so full of dust you guessed there was not much business. The night my brother took me we went into a teashop; but as I looked up in one corner, there was a square hole and an eye looking right at me. A sliding door then opened and you went down a hallway; after you walked a ways, there was another one of these eyes which opened the door to the lottery tables. Beyond the tables were all kinds of gambling in operation. You could go down a few steps to what was called the opium den and you could see the derelicts smoking their pipes. They did not care for they did not know they were being observed. Oxnard was the place to deal in opium, and they did the biggest business between San Diego and San Francisco.

Some buildings had two stories where the Chinese lived. I remember that we used to go to one called the Duck Pond for Chinese food. We went in on China Alley and there was a little pond; we climbed the stairs where they had all the smoked food hanging. The Chinese food was good and I remember always saying, "Let's go down to the Duck Pond and have noodles and chop suey."

First street car at the carbarn

Oxnard had a streetcar at one time. It was motorized and ran to Hueneme. One of the summer activities we would board the little streetcar at 5th and A Streets and ride to Hueneme, many times in just our bathing suits. Henry Horsewood ran a regular concession for bathers, with dressing rooms and serving of food. There was a long swing at the beach where seven or eight people could sit and we could swing sideways, which was great fun for all of us. After we had our swim, we would return home on the streetcar. This was the same little train which took the sugar beets to the factory. The engineers knew my father and they would always stop for me. I would aboard the train and ring the bell while they switched into the siding.

Sometimes we went riding in a wagon drawn by a horse. There was a livery stable off 5th on A Street, where my mother could hire a horse and buggy. She drove to Ventura to shop or would go just for the ride. We looked for the trees on the hill (five at that time) then we knew when we were close to Ventura. It was a long ride in a buggy over dirt roads and across the bridge. At other times there was a large crowd of us. They would get in a big wagon called a Tallyho. We would start out early in the morning on an all day trip to Point Mugu and back. There they would dig clams and get the abalones. Several people would go together in these big wagons, seven or eight. Another all day trip was to go around the triangle. My husband told me he would hire a rig to go to Ojai when



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GEO. D. COOLEY, Proprietor

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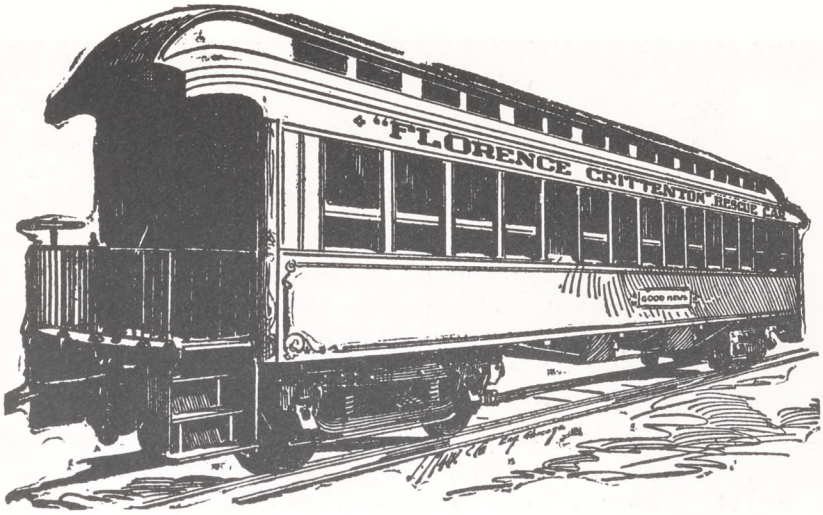
he was courting a girl there. On the way home he would go to sleep, and the horse would find his way back to Oxnard; but he would not wake up until the horse came to the stable.

When the automobile came in, my Uncle Bill bought a car. He had been an oil well driller who became disgusted with the string breaking and the men having to fish for the tools. He invented the Rotary Dunn Tong, and had a manufacturing plant in Oxnard. It was a good business and they were shipped all over the world. The Dunn Manufacturing Plant was on the corner of 5th and C Streets; William Dunn and Harry Staples were partners in this.

His auto was a Polp-Hartford, an open car with no doors. We would get up before sunrise to visit friends in Piru. The Warrings who lived in the old Cook mansion were related to Turners, my mother's family. Of the Turner girls, Etta had married Milt Nicholson and her sister, Bill Dunn. With two or three punctures that took time on the way, we did not get over to Piru until almost noon. We needed the gas lights on the car to get home, and it was very cold since there was no protection. If an automobile made 20 miles per hour, we thought that was very good time. Once I rode with Bill Train and his wife. He had the newspaper, and they took me with them to Long Beach. She was scared to death of speeding and said to him, "If you go any faster than 30 miles per hour, I am going to jump out." And, she would have!



As long as I can remember there was a city park and that pagoda. The concerts were by the Oxnard City Band and Frank Botts was the leader for many, many years. The Opera House was on C Street between 5th and 6th. I just went every Sunday night when they had vaudeville acts. After those shows everyone in Oxnard would go to Peacock's Ice Cream Parlour. When I was about nine years old, we had "tent shows". Little acts would be put on in the vacant lot across the street from where I lived. The carnivals used it also, but the circus required a larger place. They always unloaded on the railroad platform and we could watch; it was almost as good as going to the circus itself. For a couple of years there was a Chautauqua and their tents were pitched on C Street. Another entertainment was the evangelist. Their railroad car, called a "parlour car", would always park on the siding used by the sugar factory and had seats for 15 or 20 people. I thought they were the most exciting.

On Saturday night everybody went downtown, and we dressed up in our best. The stores stayed open until 9 o'clock, and one movie theatre was between A and B on 5th. We could not miss *Perils of Pauline;* and anyway, it was only a nickel. A vendor stood on the corner of 5th and A Streets, selling tamales. They were good, big and round in their cornhusks. If I went dancing as a girl, there was a hall above Lehmann Brothers' store, or the Masonic Temple on the corner of 5th and C Streets. Later part of that building was leased to a theatre. One of these two theatres in town was called the Lyric, the other the Victory.

All the businesses in Oxnard were on 5th Street from Saviers Road to around the Plaza. We always bought furniture and carpets from Roy Witman. The hotel was supposed to be an excellent one, but it burned. I watched the fire.

OXNARD

The Biggest Little City on the Coast

By J. R. Gabbert, Secretary of Board of Trade

Oxnard took its name from the family of Oxnard brothers, who were among the leaders in the early development of the beet sugar industry and in the establishment of sugar mills in this country for the manufacture of sugar from the sacharine contained in beets. As a compliment for the establishment of the "ideal" sugar factory of the United States, so-called by Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson, the people who gathered in the favored spot in Ventura County where Oxnard now stands and decreed there should grow up a little city there, also paid the compliment to one distinguished family of giving its name to the new town. That was 13 or 14 years ago, and Oxnard consisted of two or three ranch houses and a few shacks that had been moved in to accelerate the proceedings leading toward the erection or inception of a new industry and the building of a municipality.

At that time, Oxnard was not even on the railroad. A spur was built from the Southern Pacific at Montalvo, to haul heavy freight to the spot. Today Oxnard has a greater freight business over the Southern Pacific than all the other cities combined between San Luis Obispo and Los Angeles. In fact the receipts from freight shipments at this little city rank fifth among all the coast shipping points.

Eight years ago Oxnard had taken on the dignity of a city and was incorporated as a city of the sixth class. The work of making it the most modern of places in which to live and do business was then really begun and has been continued steadily. The city bonded itself for a $45,000 sewer system which remained as its only bonded indebtedness until the present spring when bonds were voted for a $100,000 municipal water system and a $30,000 street lighting improvement, the bonds for which will be sold during the present month.

All other improvements have been secured by direct tax or by assessment upon particular property. Among important ones secured thus was a beautiful city hall and library valued at $30,000, one half of which was paid for by a direct tax. A city park in the center of the city was purchased and a handsome pagoda and bandstand erected in its center. A playground site of seven acres was purchased and partially equipped with ball grounds, tennis court and other improvements. A drainage system for carrying away superflous storm water was built. In fact the city has acquired property valued at about $100,000 at this time, and outside of bond propositions.

Paved streets, cement sidewalks, electric and telephone wires

Oxnard has erected about $200,000 worth of handsome homes within the past year. A number of substantial brick blocks have been built and others are being projected. Despite the activity in building, however, there are no vacant houses and there is a crying need for the erection of more homes to rent, or apartments and flats. Desirable business locations are also at a premium.

The manufacture of $4,000,000 worth of sugar in Oxnard each year and the sale of a lima bean crop worth nearly as much, in the same city, might be considered as factors sufficient in themselves to proclaim a prosperous business city but there are other contributing features. Among them is the location of several manufacturing establishments that build the best farm implements that are used in handling bean and beet crops. There is a big machine shop that manufactures oil well tools. The Oxnard Board of Trade has recently secured the location of a mill for the manufacture of products from eucalyptus, there being many million feet of this valuable timber available within a shot distance of the city. In Oxnard are also the central offices and power station for the Ventura County Power Company, a corporation that furnishes light, power and gas for the entire county. Its two banks show the largest combined statements of any two banks in Ventura County. The stores are large and do an immense business. There are two weekly, and two daily newspapers.

In the religious, educational and social realms, the city is prominent. Almost every modern religious denomination is represented, having its own building. The grammar schools, high school and Sisters of St. Joseph Institute rank high in the county's educational system. The fraternal orders, booster clubs and kindred societies are numerous and prosperous.

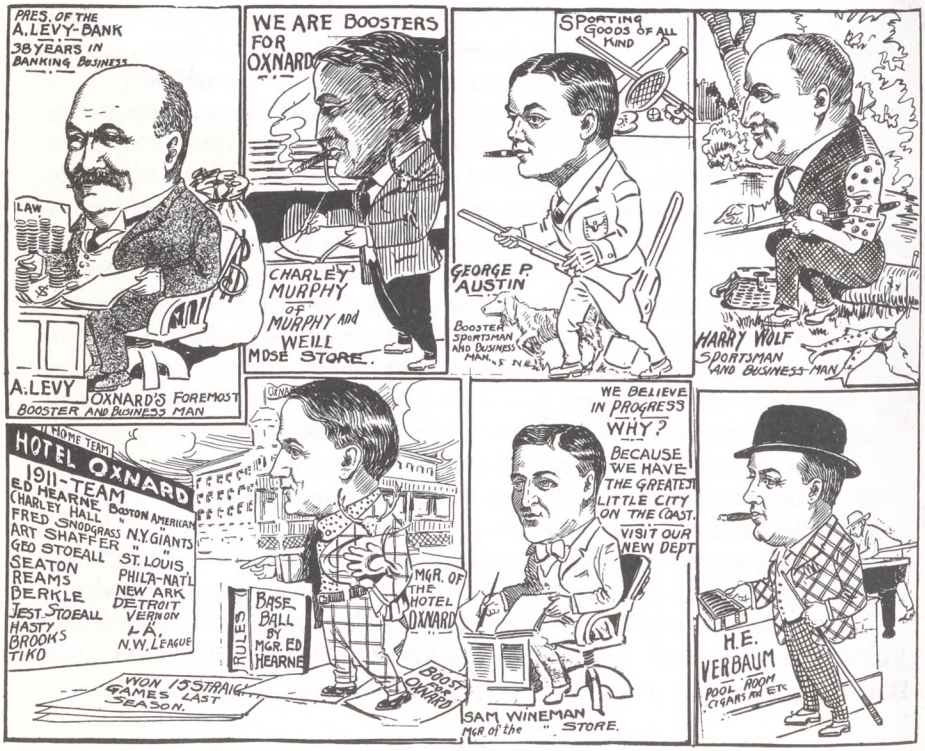
The shipping facilities offered by the Southern Pacific Railroad are augmented by a good harbor at Hueneme three miles from Oxnard, access to that point being obtained over the Ventura County Railway Company's lines. This company is owned by Oxnard capitalists and also does an immense business each fall in handling beets for the factory from various ranches and hauling beet pulp back to the farms for the feeding of many thousand head of cattle.

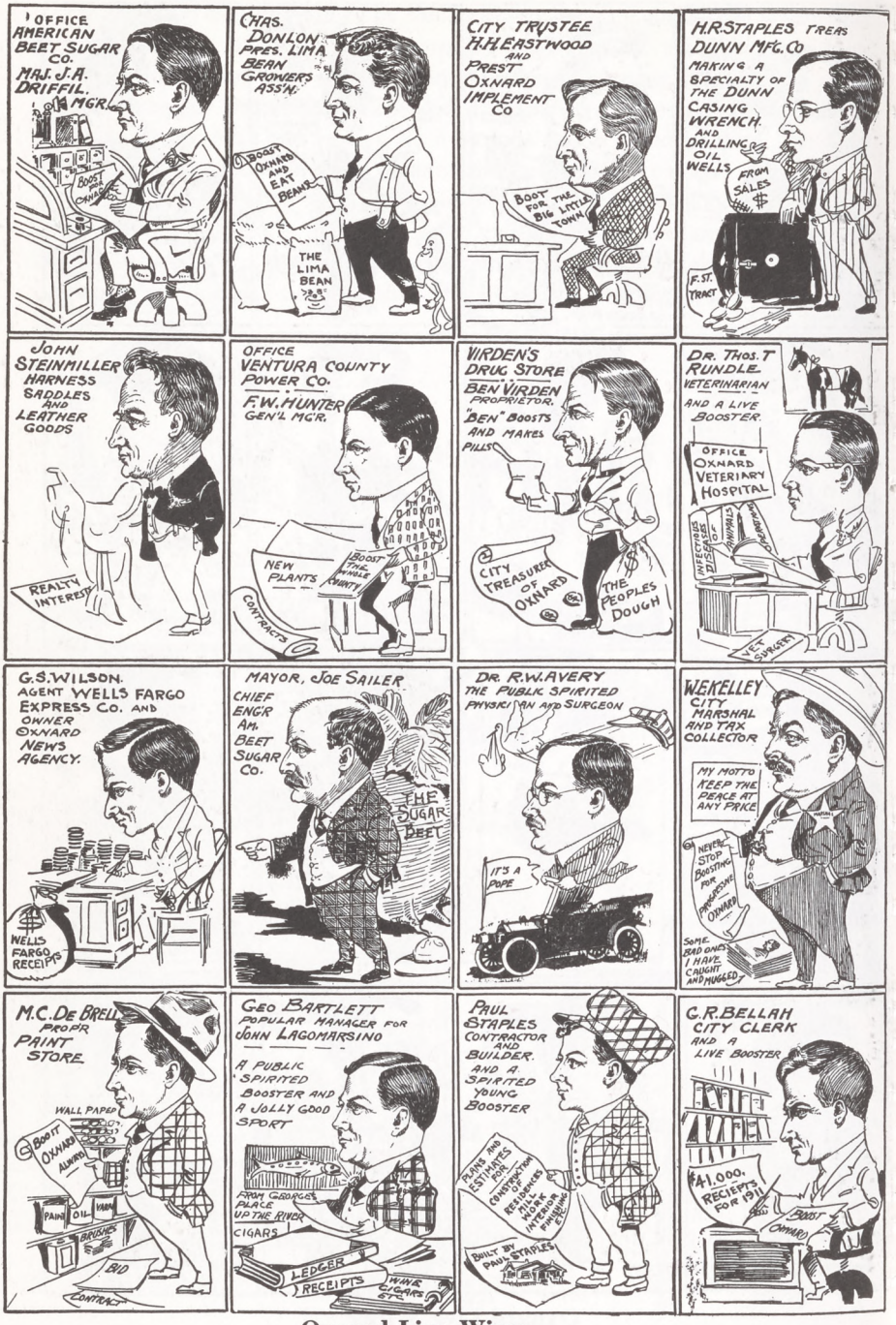
Situated with its good shipping facilities, water easily developed, cheap fuel readily secured from the oil fields, great natural wealth and an almost perfect climate, there is no undeveloped community in California that has a more promising outlook as a field of endeavor for industrial enterprises, than Oxnard.

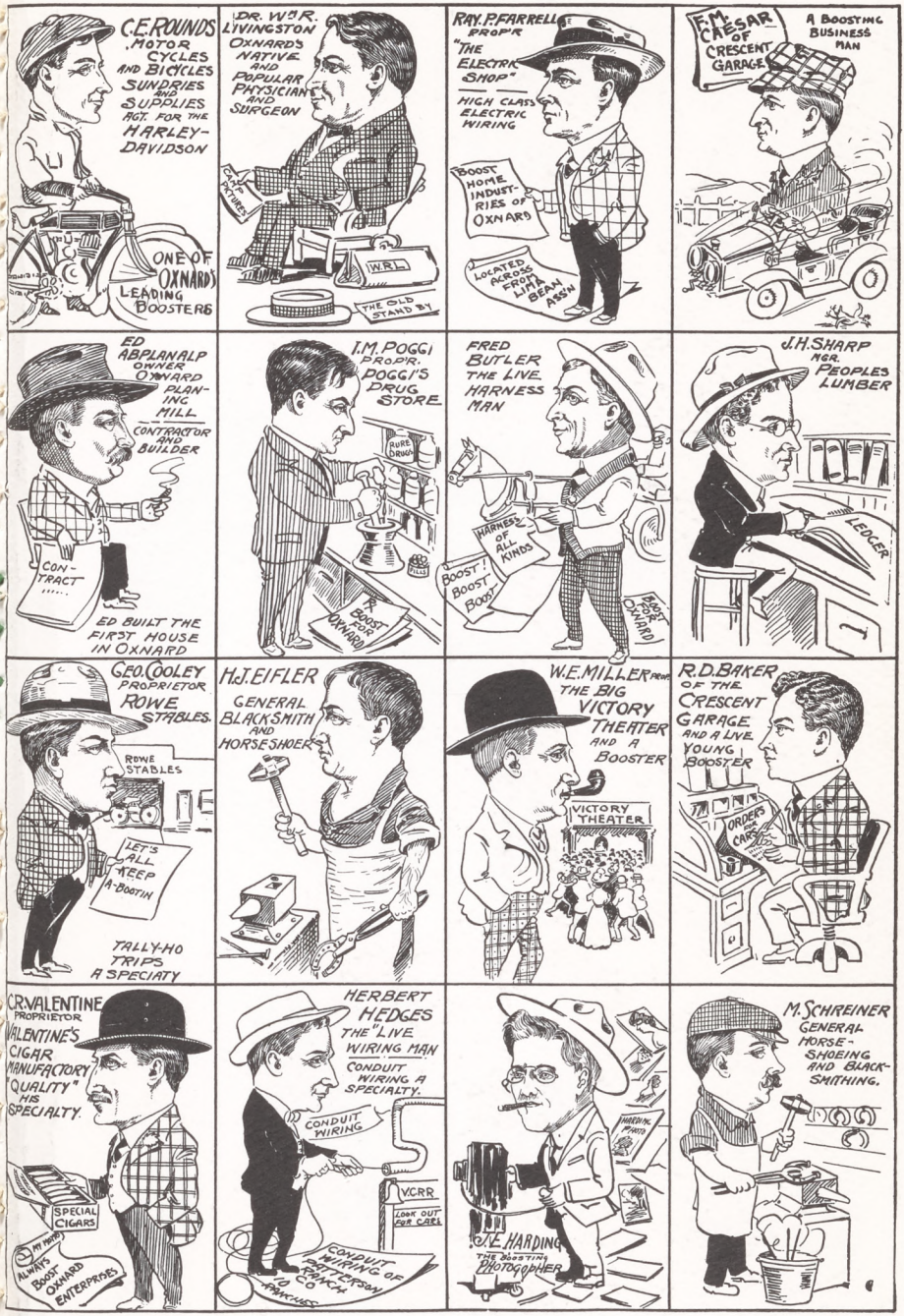
— *Out West,* May 1912

BOOSTERS

By A. H. Dutton



Oxnard Live Wires

Oxnard Live Wires


C.E. ROUNDS
MOTOR CYCLES AND BICYCLES
SUNDRIES AND SUPPLIES
AGT. FOR THE HARLEY-DAVIDSON
ONE OF OXNARD'S LEADING BOOSTERS
DR. WM R. LIVINGSTON
OXNARD'S NATIVE AND POPULAR PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON
X-RAY PICTURES
W.R.L.
THE OLD STAND BY
RAY P. FARRELL
PROP'R
"THE ELECTRIC SHOP"
HIGH CLASS ELECTRIC WIRING
BOOST HOME INDUSTRIES OF OXNARD
LOCATED ACROSS FROM LIMA BEAN ASSN
F.M. CAESAR
OF CRESCENT GARAGE
A BOOSTING BUSINESS MAN
ED ABPLANALP
OWNER OXNARD PLANING MILL
CONTRACTOR AND BUILDER
CONTRACT
ED BUILT THE FIRST HOUSE IN OXNARD
I.M. POGGI
PROP'R.
POGGI'S DRUG STORE
PURE DRUGS
BOOST FOR OXNARD
FRED BUTLER
THE LIVE HARNESS MAN
HARNESS OF ALL KINDS
BOOST! BOOST! BOOST!
BOOST OXNARD
J.H. SHARP
MGR. PEOPLES LUMBER
LEDGER
GEO. COOLEY
PROPRIETOR
ROWE STABLES
ROWE STABLES
LET'S ALL KEEP A-BOOSTIN
TALLY-HO TRIPS A SPECIALTY
H.J. EIFLER
GENERAL BLACKSMITH AND HORSESHOER
W.E. MILLER
PROP.
THE BIG VICTORY THEATER AND A BOOSTER
VICTORY THEATER
R.D. BAKER
OF THE CRESCENT GARAGE AND A LIVE YOUNG BOOSTER
ORDERS CARS
C.R. VALENTINE
PROPRIETOR
VALENTINE'S CIGAR MANUFACTORY
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SPECIAL CIGARS
MY HOBBY
ALWAYS BOOST OXNARD ENTERPRISES
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